作/者/コ/メ/ン/ト

真柴真
Shin Mashiba

The recent nightmare of being chased probably resulted from the race against time. Do you still remember the very first dream you ever had?

GFC
夢喰見聞
真柴真
3

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SQUARE ENIX.

悪夢からの解放を求め、妖狐を訪ね入々。
彼らの追いつく先には、あるのは、安らぎか絶望か…
姫狐のみが知る悪夢の結末に
今再また誘われていく——

京都の一角に在る店、「獏茶屋」開店前
其処には悪夢を食らう「獏」の其れが居た
新たに下宿人として、一匹二匹と追加
喰おいきみ等悪夢喰獏
だがそれわのしには色々と出いがあった

Yamekai Kenbun

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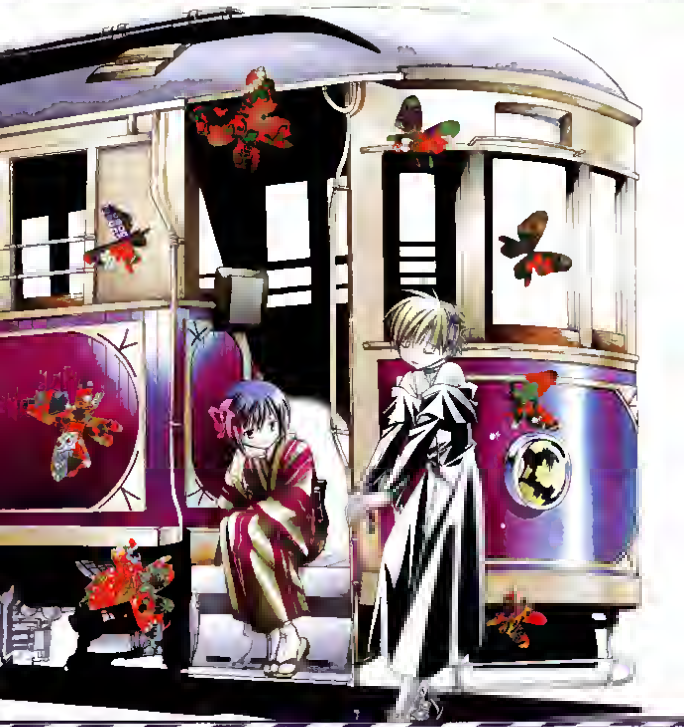

Yumekui Kenbun

Yumekui Kenbun

Mashiba_Shin

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Yumekui Kenbun

The teahouse Gunseikan is a refuge for those who seek salvation
NIGHT-MARE...
In a certain corner of the imperial capital...
LET ME SEE WHAT'S IN IT!
Kori
Kori
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S GOT ANYTHING PRECIOUS INSIDE DOES IT?
DON'T BE SO PETTY
HAHAHA- THE CAT SEEMS TO LIKE IT THERE
DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO SIT THERE?
CLICK
Black

Fourteenth Night Continuation

SPECIAL! IMPORTANT ROMANTIC STORY~

Mashiba Shin's Friend Shirai WANWAN

Hi everyone! Is it really the third volume already? Congratulations. I'm not sure if this is a proper interview or just something to fill up the space—but it's somehow gotten to the third volume. Shiro! is starting to feel that readers are starting to ask "Who are you?"

I've been invited again, but what am I supposed to do? This just seems like pointless writing... What nasty treatment! Were there such things in the past? This is outrageous! I've a feeling my friendship with Mashiba is getting affected...! No matter what, I'm very grateful to all the guests for your guidance!

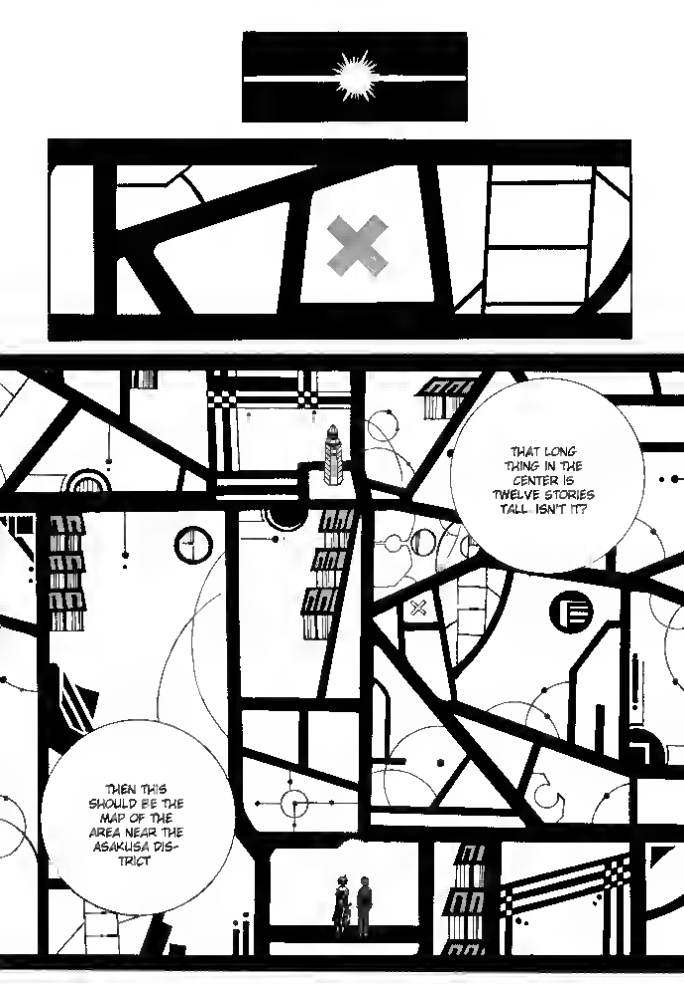
ERM... CAN I FIND HIRUKO THE BAKU HERE?
ding
ARE YOU HERE ABOUT NIGHT-MARES? PLEASE... COME IN.
?
shake
shake
Through your room and...
Meow
JUST WHAT KIND OF SUITCASE WAS THAT?! IT'S MAKING MY HEAD HURT!
AND IT WAS UNEX-PECTEDLY LIGHT...
JUST WHAT'S IN IT?!
Huh?

SO?
Erm, this is my first time
HEHE IT'S ON THE HOUSE PLEASE ENJOY
OH, I DIDN'T ORDER COFFEE
cla ck
YUP.
CONTINUATION?
OH I'M AIBA NOBU. AND I'M HERE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF MY NIGHTMARE
But each time I get near the place marked with an X on the map I'd wake up
Since a year ago I've been having this dream about following a map

YOUR SISTER AND YOUR MEMORIES?
THAT'S WHY YOU BELIEVE THAT THE LOCATION MARKED WITH AN X COULD BE THE KEY TO FINDING YOUR SISTER AND YOUR MEMORIES?
WHY ARE YOU SO EAGER TO GET TO THE X?
ACTUALLY...
ABOUT THE SAME TIME I STARTED HAVING THIS DREAM, PART OF MY MEMORIES...
AS WELL AS MY ONLY FAMILY, MY SISTER "MIYOKO", DISAPPEARED
Yes...
MIYOKO IS IRREPLACEABLE TO ME,
BUT EACH TIME I GET CLOSE TO A HINT OF HER WHEREABOUTS, I'D WAKE UP...

SO... PLEASE HIRUKO! HELP ME CONTINUE THE NIGHT-MARE!
I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT THE X MEANS!
HOW MEANING-LESS
EH?
OKAY I'LL HELP YOU
BECAUSE I'D LIKE TO SEE YOUR EXPRES-SION
WHEN YOU WAKE UP FROM YOUR DREAM

Now
sleep, and
leave reality
behind


THAT LONG THING IN THE CENTER IS TWELVE STORIES TALL, ISN'T IT?
THEN THIS SHOULD BE THE MAP OF THE AREA NEAR THE ASAKUSA DISTRICT

I'M GOING TOWARDS THE X
PLEASE STAY WITH ME AND DON'T LET ME WAKE UP
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
YEAH, BUT I ALWAYS WAKE UP AROUND HERE.
LET'S GO.
skip

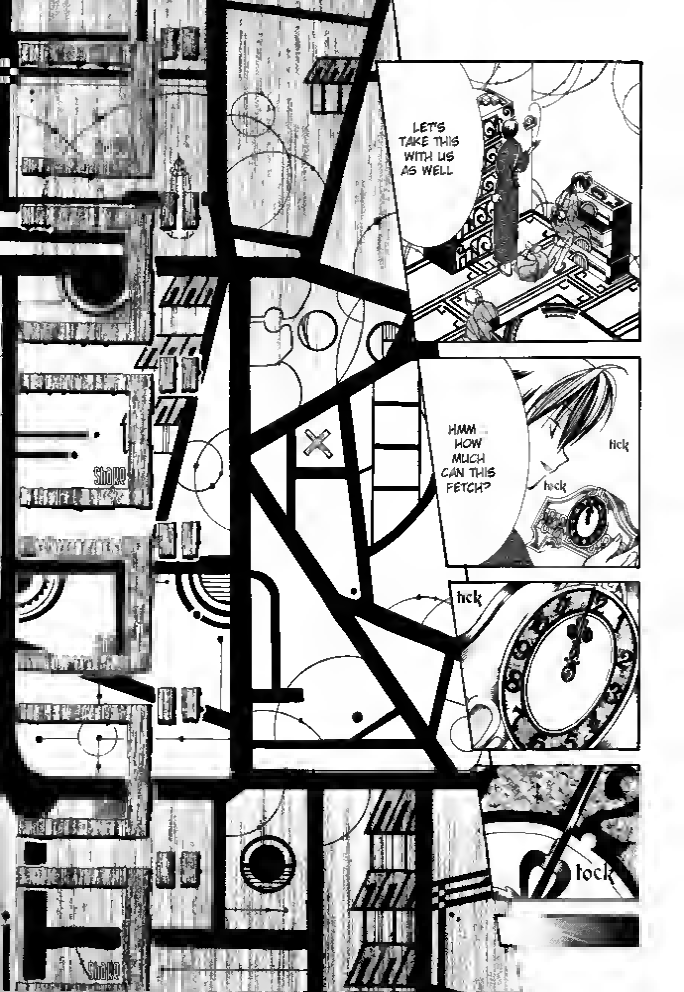
WHAT'S THAT?
MIYOKO!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN BECAUSE OF YOU...
CLAMP
grab
HIRUKO! IT'S MIYOKO! I'VE FOUND MIYOKO!
BROTHER
MIYOKO!

WHY ARE YOU MAKING SO MUCH NOISE?
!?
DIDN'T WE AGREE TO STEAL FROM THIS HOUSE TODAY? WE EVEN PLANNED OUT OUR ESCAPE ROUTE
STEAL?
Step
HURRY UP THIS IS THE PLACE, ISN'T IT?
EH?
Step
THEN THIS MAP SHOWS OUR ESCAPE ROUTE ?
YOU WANT TO HAVE DINNER TONIGHT, RIGHT?!
HURRY, OR THE OWNER WILL RETURN

rustle
rustle
THERE'S A LOT OF VALUABLES HERE...
SEPTEMBER
1ST
1973
1
...

HEH HEH...
HIDING THINGS HERE...
HAHA HOW CLEVER
HEY, AIRA
Look at all this money!
HUH?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
OH NO! SOMEONE'S HOME?!
Clatter

GRAB
PULL
twist
JUST BE GOOD AND STAY HERE, LADY.
part
part
AHAHA
BROTHER, YOU'RE FINALLY BACK TO NORMAL.


LET'S TAKE THIS WITH US AS WELL
HMM... HOW MUCH CAN THIS FETCH?
tick
tock
tick
tock
shuu
shuu

EH...? WHAT'S GOING ON!?
IS IT AN EARTH-QUAKE...? IT'S REALLY STRONG!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! IT'S DANGER-OUS!
WAIT!
MIYOKO ?!
I DON'T WANT TO KILL ANYONE!

SNAP
THIS SCENE ...
!
JUST FORGET THE WOMAN!
CRASH

Miyoko...!
MIYOKO!
Help
Brother
Brother...
SMASH

Uwaaaah

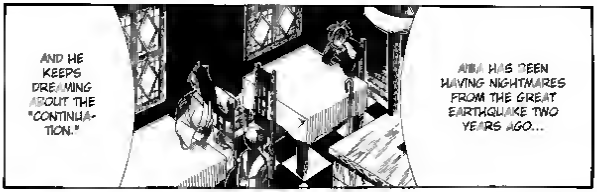
It's been five years
But --
You're not the Baku that I knew then

THE EARTH-QUAKE THAT DAY... WAS THE ONE THAT HAP-PENED TWO YEARS AGO ON SEPTEMBER 1ST
IN OTHER WORDS, THIS DREAM IS YOUR PAST MEMORIES TRYING TO RE-SURFACE...
*The great Kanto Earth-quake.
AND...
SAY...

Where's Miyoko...?
Where is she?
AND...
...
YOUR SISTER'S DEATH HIT YOU SO HARD THAT YOU LOST YOUR MEMORY—
It's time to wake up.

I'M REALLY SORRY...
LOOKS LIKE WE DIDN'T GET TO GO TO THE X AFTER ALL,
BECAUSE I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS
I'M REALLY DISAPPOINTED
I WAS SUCH A FOOL TO HAVE PUT MY HOPES IN A BAKU
I WON'T BE COMING BACK.
Miyako...
Where are you?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? SO WHAT'S AT THE PLACE WITH THE X?
NO. HE SAW WHAT HE WANTED TO
WHY DIDN'T YOU LET HIM SEE WHAT HAPPENED AFTER-WARDS?
EH?
MONEY
Money? Now, it sounds like a treasure map!
IF THAT'S THE CASE HOW ABOUT TRYING TO SEARCH FOR THE PLACE IN REAL LIFE? MAYBE WE'LL BE ABLE TO DIG OUT SOME MONEY TOO!
HIRUKO, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'M NOT INTERESTED. BE-SIDES, THAT PLACE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE CHANGED DRASTICALLY BY NOW.
AND YOU'LL FIND MORE THAN JUST MONEY IF YOU DIG.


AND HE KEEPS DREAMING ABOUT THE "CONTINUATION."
AIBA HAS BEEN HAVING NIGHTMARES FROM THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE TWO YEARS AGO...

HE COULDN'T FACE HIS SISTER'S DEATH, SO HE KEPT REPRESSING THAT MEMORY.
THEN AIBA...

THE MEMORY OF LOSING HIS BELOVED SISTER...
ACTUALLY, THE "CONTINUATION" IS THE CRIME HE COMMITTED, AND...

AND HE'LL KEEP ON LOOKING FOR A SISTER WHO NO LONGER EXISTS...
THAT'S RIGHT. HE'LL KEEP HAVING THE SAME NIGHTMARE
That's the price he must pay for his crime...

Yamekai Kenbun

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Fifteenth
Night
Voice

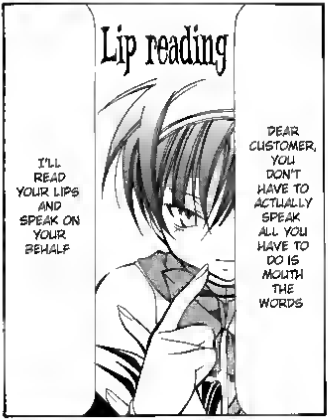
Personally, I like this logo very much. What do you think? Except it starts to look like the stories are related to the special ears, eyes, and mouth additions. I really hope the magazine will be able to use this special logo once. I'm sure it'll be interesting. What do you think? I think ...as long as everyone writes "Logo" about five times in the feedback enclosed in the magazine, this might come true (laughs) Yes! The power of one person might be small, but if everyone worked together ..!

Please help me out! (laughs)

I'm using a marker to draw the logo on my mouse pad, and am going to give it to Mashiba as a gift. But after some time, the ink has worn out. And only in half a year! I'm sure it'll get even worse within three years.

LOOK AT THIS HIRUKO ISN'T IT STRANGE?
ha ha ha!
It's a place frequented by those who seek salvation.
In a certain corner of the imperial capital lies the teahouse Ginsuikan.
I'M MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR FATHER WHO LETS A USELESS BUM LIKE YOU DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE JUST GOT TOO MUCH MONEY TO WASTE.
This merchandise isn't very useful, but I still like it
WOULDN'T IT BE INTERESTING TO HEAR THE NEWS WITH THIS THING?
EVEN YOU MUST OCCASIONALLY GO OUT DURING THE DAYTIME
WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
I bought something really nice.
COME LOOK AT THIS, MIZUKI!
FORGET IT!
I WON'T LET YOU SEE MY FAVORITE THING THEN!
CLACK
MY WHAT A NICE LITTLE SHOP

IS THIS THE FAMOUS GIN-SEOKAN?
CON I FIND HIOKO THE OKU HERE?
IS HE THIS CHARMING FELLOW OVER HERE?
SO YOU'RE HIRUKO
WHAT A PLEASURE
HM, I'M SO GLAD YOU LOOK MUCH NICER THAN I THOUGHT
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO NERVOUS? THERE'S NOTHING TO BE FRIGHTENED OF
AND THAT'S WHY YOUR SPEECH IS IMPAIRED?
YOU'RE HAVING NIGHT-MARES?
QT'S LOKE THIS


Lip reading
I'LL READ YOUR LIPS AND SPEAK ON YOUR BEHALF
DEAR CUSTOMER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACTUALLY SPEAK ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS MOUTH THE WORDS

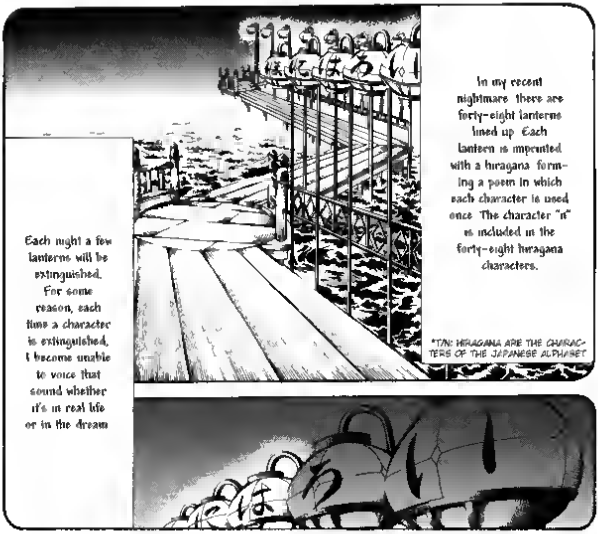
PLEASE
PLEASE, HAVE A SEAT.

HIRUKO HE KEEPS MISSING WORDS. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ASK HIM ANY-THING ?
IT'S OKAY

"REALLY...? THEN I'LL GIVE IT A TRY."
MOUTH
MOUTH

!

"MY NAME IS TSUZURA OTOMITSU AND I'M A VOICE ACTOR FOR MOVING PICTURES IN THE ASAKUSA THEATER."
Moving pictures were the old movies during that time. They were usually silent films
Voice actor: People who are responsible for coordinating the stage lines of silent movies or frames.
Lover's Delusion
Night of Illusions
OH! THERE USED TO BE A CUSTOMER WHO KEPT DREAMING ABOUT THE MOVIE CALLED "NIGHT OF ILLUSIONS"
"...IS THAT SO? I WAS A VOICE ACTOR FOR THAT MOVIE."
YOU MEAN YOU WERE THE VOICE ACTOR FOR THE MALE LEAD?
"BUT I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT I'M NOT SUITED FOR THIS JOB."
"...I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHY MYSELF."
BUT ISN'T IT TROUBLESOME FOR A VOICE ACTOR TO BE UNABLE TO SPEAK?
"YES, INDEED!"
"IF THIS CONTINUES, I'LL LOSE MY JOB!"
"AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THIS NIGHTMARE!"


In my recent nightmare there are forty-eight lanterns lined up. Each lantern is imprinted with a hiragana forming a poem in which each character is used once. The character "n" is included in the forty-eight hiragana characters.
*TN: HIRAGANA ARE THE CHARACTERS OF THE JAPANESE ALPHABET
Each night a few lanterns will be extinguished. For some reason, each time a character is extinguished, I become unable to voice that sound whether it's in real life or in the dream

"WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I LOSE MY SPEECH COMPLETELY...?"
"THERE MUST BE SOMEONE DOING THIS SO PLEASE FIND HIM, HIRUKO, AND LOCK HIM UP!"

"PLEASE!"
"I CAME BECAUSE I BELIEVED IN YOU!"
I CAN'T DO THAT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FLATTER ME ANY-MORE...
I'LL JUST GET YOU YOUR VOICE BACK
whew...
"YOU'VE OBSERVA-TION SKILLS BEYOND THAT OF NORMAL PEOPLE..."
"I COULD TELL FROM THE START."
"AS WELL AS KINDNESS AND A SENSE OF JUSTICE THAT WON'T ALLOW YOU TO LEAVE BEHIND ANYONE IN TROUBLE."
JUST WHAT AM I SAYING...?

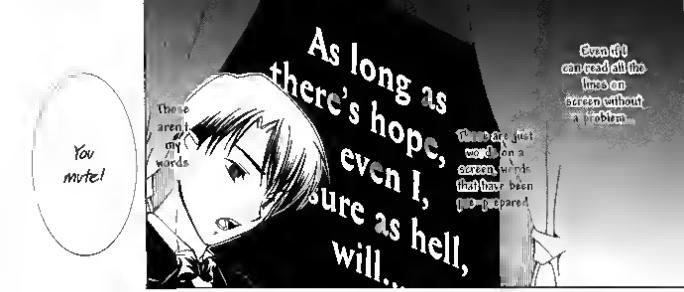
Now, sleep.
Leave reality behind for a while.

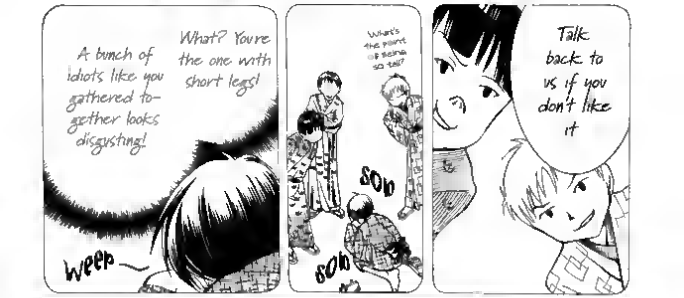
SO THE FIRST HALF OF THE POEM HAS BEEN EXTINGUISHED.

"WHERE IS HE?"
"JUST WHO IS BEHIND THIS?"
P
"OH — ANOTHER ONE'S GOING OUT!"
CRUNCH
...
BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MATTER
PERHAPS WE SHOULD JUST TRY TO RELIGHT THE LANTERNS ISN'T THAT THE SMARTER THING TO DO?
YOU WANT ME TO HELP YOU FIND THE CULPRIT, DON'T YOU?
BUT TSUZURA,
RATHER THAN TRYING TO CHASE HIM

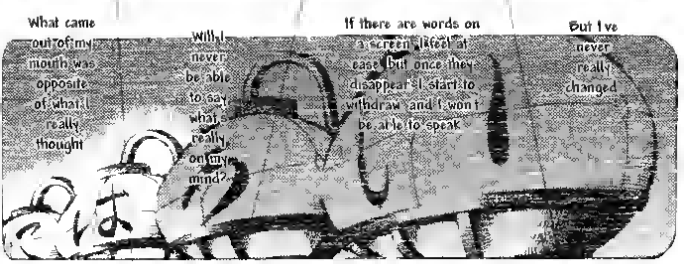
I DID IT! I CAN SAY IT NOW!
"KA."
CAN YOU SAY "KA" NOW?
I'M GOING TO RELIGHT THE LANTERN MARKED "KA".
THEN LET'S RELIGHT THEM ONE AT A TIME!
WA
WO
RU
NU
RI
CHI
TO
HO
HE
THIS IS WONDERFUL I CAN WORK AGAIN
AH... THE LOST SOUNDS ARE COMING BACK TO ME
THIS IS WONDERFUL!
WONDERFUL

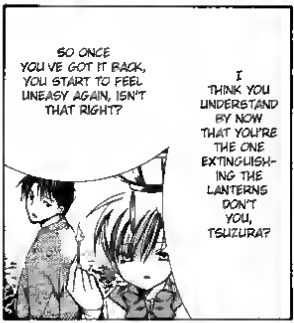
WHY WOULD I HAVE A DREAM LIKE THIS?
I CAN'T GET IT
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING SO PALE? YOU'VE FOUND YOUR VOICE HAVEN'T YOU?
!!
I SHOULD BE FEELING REALLY HAPPY... SHOULDN'T I?
I STILL FEEL VERY UNEASY. WHY...?
?
W—WHY AM I STILL FEELING LIKE THIS?
WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE A VOICE ACTOR, TSUZURA?
WHY ARE YOU ASKING ALL OF THE SUDDEN?
BECAUSE I WASN'T VERY GOOD AT SPEAKING BEFORE
Everyone looked down on me bullied me...
So I was constantly misunderstood.
No. I should say that I've always been introverted, never daring to say what I really thought
IN ORDER TO CONQUER MY WEAKNESS I KEPT TRYING TO LEARN HOW TO SPEAK PROPERLY
AND SO I BECAME A VOICE ACTOR
BUT...

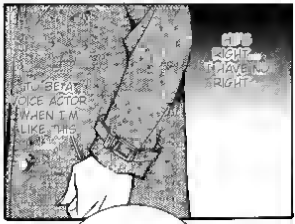

You mute!
These aren't my words
As long as there's hope, even I, sure as hell, will...
Even if I can read all the lines on screen without a problem
They're just words on a screen, words that have been pre-prepared


A bunch of idiots like you gathered together disgusting!
What? You're the one with short legs!
weep~
What's the point of being so tall?
sob
sob
Talk back to us if you don't like it

That's right... I wanted to say those things back then. I wanted to have the courage to say what I wanted from my heart


What came out of my mouth was opposite of what I really thought
Will I never be able to say what's really on my mind?
If there are words on a screen, I feel at ease, but once they disappear, I start to withdraw and I won't be able to speak
But I've never really changed


SO ONCE YOU'VE GOT IT BACK, YOU START TO FEEL UNEASY AGAIN, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
I THINK YOU UNDERSTAND BY NOW THAT YOU'RE THE ONE EXTINGUISHING THE LANTERNS DON'T YOU, TSUZURA?



Why don't I just say nothing at all

OH WHY AM I SO WEAK AND COWARDLY?!
EVEN NOW I KEEP MOST OF WHAT I FEEL LOCKED UP INSIDE
IF I CAN'T SAY WHAT I REALLY WANT TO
AND IF
IT MAKES IT HARD TO EAT OR SLEE

Then please help me!
Help?
Hey, are you that voice actor for the movie?
AN ENTHUSIASTIC FAN CAME UP TO ME AND SAID
THAT'S RIGHT... AFTER "NIGHT OF ILLUSIONS" WAS SHOWN ...
They decided to elope and in the end killed themselves by jumping down a waterfall
Um, that movie described a couple whose marriage was opposed by society...
And I dream of it every night
But I can't stand the thought of my favorite actress, Benipana, killing herself
So I was hoping that you'll help me change the ending.
Change the ending?
How can I do that?
How?
Hoho~ Only a voice actor like yourself can do that

"AS LONG AS THAT IS YOUR WISH, I'LL FOLLOW YOU EVEN TO DEATH."
After reconfirming the others' intention to commit suicide, the lover, Kayama will say
"WILL YOU ALWAYS HOLD MY HAND?"
Just as the story enters its climax, Bempana says...
"You can't die. No matter what happens, you have to live on"
OK?
To what I want to say!
I want you to change the lines
THE GUY YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT CAME TO LOOK FOR ME
AFTER THAT, HE NEVER RETURNED
EH?
WHAT SHOULD I SAY...
IF I COULD SAY WHAT I REALLY THOUGHT IT WOULD-
BE SO MUCH BETTER...
BUT... I-REALLY AGREED WITH WHAT HE SAID...
I REJECTED HIM, OF COURSE, BECAUSE THAT WAS MY JOB
HM, THAT'S TRUE

In the end, he stopped his dream-Benipana from committing suicide.
He kept dreaming of Benipana in her last scene in "Night of Illusions" and that nightmare had been bothering him.
This time in Kagesa Town.
IT LOOKS LIKE ALL THE MEN WHO LIKE HER OR HAVE WORKED WITH HER WOULD BE FORCED TO COMMIT SUICIDE...
Hmm...
BUT I FOUND OUT IN THE PAPERS A FEW DAYS LATER THAT BENIPANA WAS OBSESSED WITH COMMITTING SUICIDE.
I'm sure you know about that too?
THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD FORGIVE A WOMAN LIKE THAT.
ACTUALLY, I HATED IT!
OK, TSUZURA.
Heh, heh...at least he's starting to behave.
HE STARTED HAVING NIGHTMARES AGAIN, SO HE CAME BACK TO LOOK FOR ME.
KAGESA CARED TOO DEEPLY FOR HER, SO HE GOT CAUGHT UP IN IT

IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT I ONLY START TO FEAR AFTER LOSING MY SPEECH
LANGUAGE IS SOMETHING VERY COMMON, BUT WHEN I SUDDENLY CAN'T PRONOUNCE A SOUND, THE FEELING OF DESPERATION AND DESPAIR IS NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE DESCRIBED
BUT
IN YOUR CURRENT STATE, I'M SURE YOU'LL COME BACK TO ASK FOR HELP
ALL THE LANTERNS ARE LIT, BUT ...
I'M STILL HESITATING
T-THAT'S RIGHT
SHOULD I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY NOW TO TAKE HOLD OF MY COUR..GE AS WELL?
BUT IT'S ALREADY GOT'EN THEM ALL BACK
THE COURAGE TO REALLY SAY WHAT I WANT TO——!

THIS IS A SEGMENT OF KAGESA'S NIGHTMARE
ALL THE DREAMS I COLLECT COME TO ME, SO REPLAYING THEM IS VERY EASY.
TSUZURA
WHY DON'T YOU TRY SAYING WHAT YOU WANT TO HERE?
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY?
COME. JUST AS KAGESA DID. USE YOUR OWN WORDS TO SPEAK TO BENIPANA.

BECAUSE YOU'RE A VOICE ACTOR, I PUT A SCREEN UP FOR YOU.
BUT
THIS IS TOO SUDDEN!

YOU'LL FIND IT EASIER TO SPEAK THAT WAY.
YOU'RE VERY GOOD AT VOICEOVERS, AREN'T YOU? SO JUST PRETEND THAT YOU'RE KAYAMA, AND MATCH THE SOUND AS USUAL

AND I CAN PROBABLY ONLY DO IT NOW.
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO IT
HE'S RIGHT

"WILL YOU ALWAYS HOLD ON TO MY HAND?"
SAY THE WORDS THAT I WANTED TO SAY WHEN I LEARNED ABOUT THE TRUTH BEHIND BENIBANA!
SPEAK THEN!

KEEP DREAMING! WHO WANTS TO DIE WITH YOU? YOU'RE A SELFISH WOMAN, PLAYING WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS!
IF YOU WANT TO DIE SO BADLY, GO DIE ON YOUR OWN!
I DID IT!
I FINALLY SAID WHAT I WANTED TO!
HAHA
IT FEELS REALLY GOOD
THIS IS THE BEST FEELING I'VE EVER HAD!

I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN COMPLETELY CLEANSED!
WAS THAT REALLY ME SPEAKING? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
THAT WAS GREAT!
HOW WAS IT?
ALTHOUGH I WAS PRETENDING TO BE KAYAMA, IT SOUNDED VERY NATURAL.
BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF THE OTHER PERSON GETS HURT BECAUSE I SAID TOO MUCH?
THANK GOD THIS IS JUST A DREAM...
Could this really be what I'm like ?
OR WHAT IF I DISCOVERED ONLY AFTER SPEAKING
THAT MY WORDS WERE REALLY CHILDISH?

AND... I COULD NEVER SAY SOMETHING TO HURT OTHERS!
I CAN'T ACCEPT ANY OF THOSE
IN MY MIND I'M ALWAYS AFRAID OF REBUTTAL AND REVENGE
I CAN NEVER SPEAK LIKE THAT IN REAL LIFE
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN KEEPING THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE IS BEST.
THAT'S RIGHT... HAVEN'T I BECOME SUCCESSFUL BY USING THIS VOICE?
IF THAT'S THE CASE THEN THINGS ARE FINE RIGHT NOW
As long as there's hope, even I, sure as hell, will...
BECAUSE ... EVEN IF I'M ONLY LOOKING AT THE SCREEN, I'LL BE ABLE TO MATCH THE VOICES, AND BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER.

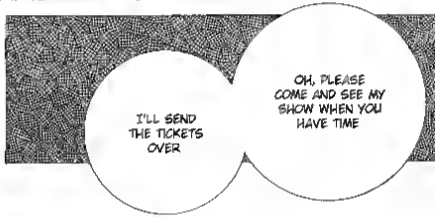
YUP, THAT'S RIGHT.
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS EVEN IF THOSE AREN'T YOUR THOUGHTS, AS LONG AS YOU CAN SPEAK THOSE WORDS YOU'LL BE CONTENT?
VOICE ACTORS MAKE A LIVING BY SPEAK-ING THAT WAY
THEN SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR NIGHT-MARE
It's time to wake.

I CAN'T TAKE SO MUCH MONEY
THIS MONEY REPRESENTS THE VALUE OF MY VOICE AND OF MY PRIDE IN MY ABILITY!
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU THAT I CAN CONTINUE BEING A VOICE ACTOR
PLEASE DON'T SAY THAT
BESIDES, I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT THANK YOU GIFTS
PLEASE DON'T LOOK DOWN ON THEM.
WHAT A STUBBORN GUY...
WELL THEN, PLEASE TAKE THIS IN RETURN
OH, THAT'S HIFUMI'S
BUT THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH!
LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT TO ACCEPT IT, THEN.

I'M VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU
ALL THE SAME, I'M GLAD YOU ACCEPTED MY TOKENS OF APPRECIA-TION

HAHA
WHAT IS IT?
Don't know

CLACK


Bye!
I'LL SEND THE TICKETS OVER
OH, PLEASE COME AND SEE MY SHOW WHEN YOU HAVE TIME

HE PROBABLY JUST WANTS TO HAVE SOME KIND OF A SETTLE-MENT

WHAT A PUSHY GUY

IT TASTES MURKY

A few days later ——
WHAT? YOU'RE STILL ANGRY?
OF COURSE
I ALREADY SAID IT WAS SOMETHING I LIKED A LOT, AND YOU STILL WENT AHEAD AND GAVE IT AWAY
JUST WHAT WAS IT?
IT WAS SOMETHING THAT I HAD TO ASK A SHOP TO HUNT DOWN FOR ME IT WAS
HEY, THAT'S
MY DOLL!
CLACK
HAHA! THIS SHOP IS STILL DARK AS EVER
HEY! GIVE THAT BACK!
THIS?
EH? WHAT'S WRONG?

He looked much better the last time he came.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WHAT'S UP WITH THOSE STUPID EXPRESSIONS?
Uneasy
HEY, HEY... WHERE THE HELL'RE YOU LOOKING?
HERE! IT'S MY DOLL THAT'S DOING THE TALKING!

YO, IT'S BEEN A WHILE EVERY-ONE
TSUZURA ...?

AFTER THE DREAM, HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO GIVE UP THE JOY OF SAYING WHAT HE THOUGHT.
WELL I GUESS THAT'S NORMAL
HAHA YOU'RE SPEECH-LESS...
And I felt a strately hot mouth make move-ments so I could play with it.
Uh... what is this?

THIS TIME HE'S PRETENDING TO BE A DOLL, AND IS SPEAKING FOR THE DOLL BUT WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT
You just complain all day!
You
What are you mom?
SO JUST AS HE PRETENDED TO BE KAYAMA BACK THEN

THESE HEARTFELT WORDS COME FROM DEEP WITHIN ME
THAT IT WOULD BECOME A HABIT
Are you out to die? You arse!

AND IN THE END IT WAS STILL THE KAYAMA ON THE SCREEN
Keep dreaming! Who wants to die with you? You're a selfish woman, playing with other people's feelings!
BACK THEN I THOUGHT IT WAS SAID VERY NATURALLY BUT THAT WAS BECAUSE THE ONE WHO WAS SPEAKING WAS KAYAMA, NOT ME...
THAT'S RIGHT...NOT ME...
IT WASN'T ME, AND I DON'T HAVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE.
AND HE SLOWLY BECAME UNABLE TO SPEAK WITHOUT THE DOLL!
THAT IDIOT COULDN'T DROP IT! HE NO LONGER HAD TO KEEP WHAT HE REALLY THOUGHT INSIDE HIMSELF, SO HE MADE USE OF THE DOLL TO REPLACE KAYAMA, AND STARTED SAYING WHAT HE FELT
THE INTROVERTED TSUZURA BECAME AFRAID OF THE DOLL THAT WAS VOICING HIS INNERMOST THOUGHTS... MOST LIKELY...
IN THE END, NOT ONLY DID HE FAIL TO REPRESS THAT URGE USING REASON...

HE CAN NO LONGER BE A VOICE ACTOR
THERE'S NO SENSE IN GIVING US TICKETS WHEN YOU'RE LIKE THAT
HAHA! THIS IS FUN! TALKING HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY STRENGTH!
THEN THERE'S NO REASON TO STAY HERE ANYMORE I SHOULD GO BACK
OH... YOU'VE GOT A POINT
GASP
SO THAT'S WHAT HE REALLY WANTED TO TELL YOU?
DON'T SPEAK IT. NO DOUBT, IT'S PROBABLY SOMETHING SHORT
BYE SHORTIE!
CLACK

Yamekai Kenbun

Scanner: Lelei

Translator: Sagami

Proofreader: ArgentSylph

Editor: Nocturnal

Quality Checker: Kalendel

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CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE END OF YOUR LIFESPAN.
BAM
is a place where people seek salvation
Located in a corner of the imperial capital
the teahouse Gimeiritan
I DON'T KNOW!
OK. I'VE DECIDED! WHEN IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, I'LL FILL THE SHOP WITH WEEDS!!
HEY. IT'S MY BIRTHDAY TODAY SURELY YOU CAN COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER THAN THAT?
WHEN'S YOUR BIRTHDAY? TELL ME!!
HMPH. JUST AS I EXPECTED. YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT BIRTHDAYS DO YOU?
!

Sixteenth Night

Walls (part I)

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW? THE DAY YOU WERE BORN . . .

Shiroi WANWAN's power to select people " An amusing riddle "

Please send the answer to Mashiro. Those who can make Shiroi laugh will get an Ouija board with both Mashiro's and Shiroi's signatures! (One person only)

1. Ginsetkan's coffee tastes fantastic and there's a rumor that there's a secret recipe. What is the secret ingredient? (example. seaweed)

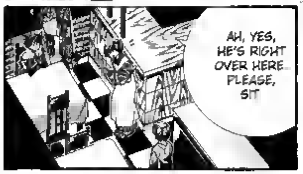
2. As everyone is aware Anton (Hitsuji)'s cat hates him. There are three things that it cannot forgive him for. What are they?

3. Everyone knows that Anton likes to dress up. But there's a piece of clothing that he'll wear only when he's dead. What is it?

4. Ginsetkan has a seat that no one wants to sit on. What's the story behind that seat?

5. Ginsetkan's enterance has a bell that rings "clack." Actually that's not a bell at all. What is it?

P.144^ To be Continued


AH, YES, HE'S RIGHT OVER HERE. PLEASE, SIT.

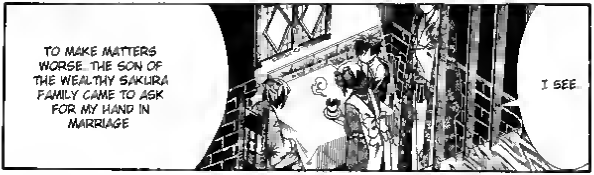
I'M SAITOU KASUGA.
SAITOU?

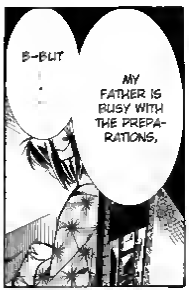
SURELY SHE COULDN'T BE...

EXCUSE ME.
IS HIRUKO THE BAKU HERE?

SHE COULD BE THE DAUGHTER OF THE NOBLE SAITOU FAMILY
HEY, HIRUKO, YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT.

IT?
IT'S LIKE THIS...
...THEN, WILL IT BE EASIER FOR YOU TO HEAR ABOUT IT?
SO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
MY FATHER INVESTED EVERYTHING HE HAD TO EXTRACT MINERALS IN MANCHURIA.
HOWEVER, THE INVESTMENT FAILED, AND THE SAITOU FAMILY IS ON THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY


TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE SON OF THE WEALTHY SAKURA FAMILY CAME TO ASK FOR MY HAND IN MARRIAGE
I SEE

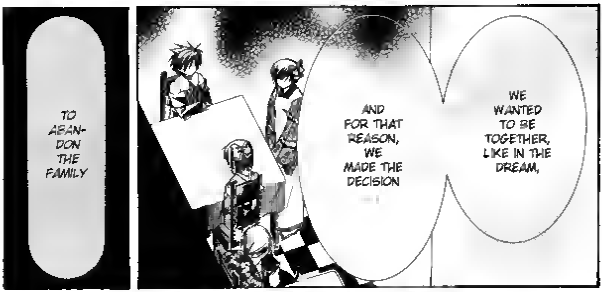

B-BUT
MY FATHER IS BUSY WITH THE PREPARATIONS,

AND IF KASUGA MARRIES HIM, SHE'LL BE ABLE TO USE THE SAKURA FAMILY FORTUNE TO SAVE THE SAITOU FAMILY.
BY MARRYING INTO NOBILITY, THE SAKURA FAMILY WILL INCREASE THEIR SOCIAL STANDING,

I CAN'T AGREE TO THIS!
THERE'S ALREADY SOMEONE I LIKE!

HIYAMA SHINOBU, A SCHOLAR AT MY HOUSE, IS AN OUTSTANDING AND GENTLE PERSON
Ooh~
HE'S A VERY SINCERE PERSON
MY FATHER THOUGHT HIGHLY OF HIM, AND AGREED TO LET US BE TOGETHER AT FIRST
BUT... NOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED, AND WE'RE GOING TO BE TORN APART
WE CAN'T ACCEPT THIS, AND OUR FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER ARE GETTING STRONGER
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS THAT WE STARTED HAVING THE SAME DREAM
EH? WHAT KIND OF DREAM?
...
DREAMS OF A "RENDEZVOUS"

We'd spend some happy moments together in the woods just behind the house.
That's right... all by ourselves, without anyone disturbing us.


TO ABANDON THE FAMILY
AND FOR THAT REASON, WE MADE THE DECISION
WE WANTED TO BE TOGETHER, LIKE IN THE DREAM,

WE ARRANGED TO ESCAPE TO THE WOODS THAT WE DREAMT ABOUT
OH! TO ELOPE?

IT WAS RAINING THAT DAY.
BUT...
The rain turned the ground to mud. Hiyama slipped.
And was taken away by the men, as I after us...
My father just watched the whole thing.
And my father cut me off from him completely.
In the end I was taken back home.

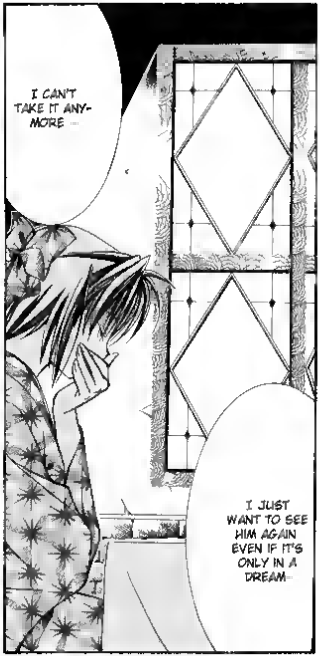
My desire to meet him again kept growing —
And I started having dreams of us meeting —

FROM THAT DAY ON... ALL I CAN SEE IS OUR ATTEMPT TO ELOPE
SO WHAT CHANGED IN THIS DREAM?
HOW TERRIBLE
He never appears. Instead, there's this huge, horrible wall.
But... I don't know why...

PLEASE SAVE ME FROM THIS NIGHTMARE!
PLEASE HELP ME GET RID OF THAT WALL, HIRUKO

COULD IT BE THAT HIYAMA IS BEHIND THAT WALL?
THAT'S WHAT I THINK TOO. BUT THE WALL IS TOO HIGH...

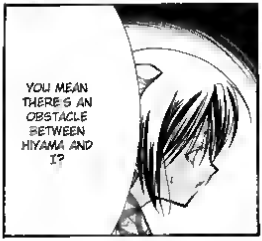
INTERESTING

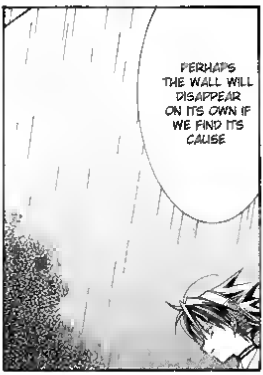

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE...
I JUST WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN EVEN IF IT'S ONLY IN A DREAM...

LET'S SEE THIS DREAM OF YOURS

Come,
sleep now and
leave reality
behind.

RAIN...
JUST LIKE THE DAY THEY TRIED TO ELOPE...?
AND THE WALL

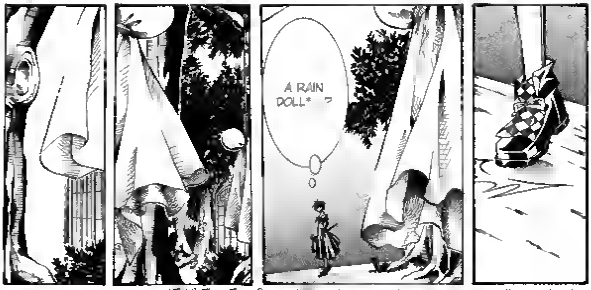

YOU MEAN THERE'S AN OBSTACLE BETWEEN HIYAMA AND I?


PERHAPS THE WALL WILL DISAPPEAR ON ITS OWN IF WE FIND ITS CAUSE

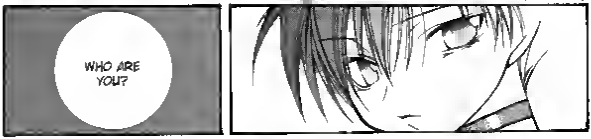
KASUGA, IF THIS WALL SEPARATES YOU TWO
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT WHY THE WALL WAS ERECTED. IF NOT, THERE'LL BE NO POINT IN YOUR MEETING

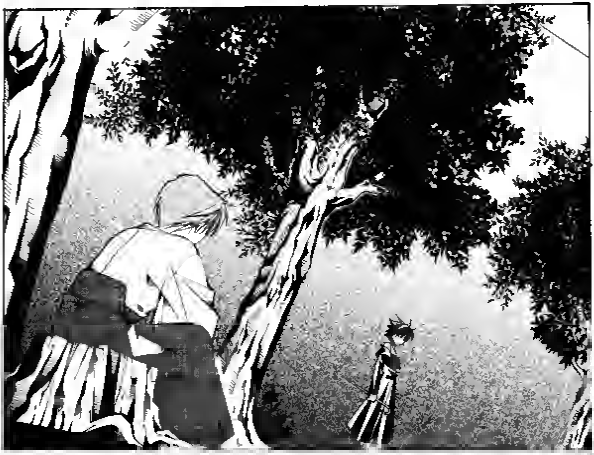
Jump
OK.
PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR A BIT.
SURELY IT'S NOT...
float float

JUST AS I EXPECTED
IT'S SUNNY OVER HERE
BUT WHY?
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG



[T/N] Teru Teru Bouzu dolls are hung out when someone wants the rain to stop





I'M HIRUKO, A BAKU. KASUGA ASKED ME TO ENTER THIS DREAM
I'M HIYAMA SHINOBU
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT SHE'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL I GATHER?
KASUGA...
OH... IF ONLY THIS WALL DIDN'T EXIST...

!
WHY...? BECAUSE IT WAS SUNNY THAT DAY.
?
BUT IT'S REALLY STRANGE. THIS DREAM SHOULD BE REFLECTING WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY YOU TWO ELOPED. SO WHY IS IT SUNNY?
THAT'S ODD — IT WAS A REALLY LOVELY DAY. TOO. WHY DID SHE MAKE THAT MISTAKE?
DID KAGUGA THINK IT WAS A RAINY DAY?
DON'T LAUGH, BUT I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LUCKIER IF IT WAS LARGER
WE EVEN MADE THAT FOR GOOD LUCK
...

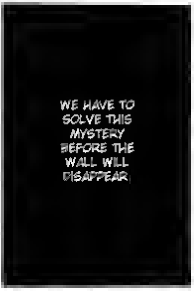
ACCORDING TO KASUGA, YOU SLIPPED AND FELL THAT DAY BECAUSE OF THE RAIN—
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THERE'S NO WAY I WOULD DO ANYTHING AS STUPID AS THAT!
NO— I AM INDEED A FOOL
I ACTUALLY LET GO OF MY BELOVED'S HAND—
WHAT HAPPENED? CAN YOU TELL ME?
WELL—

That day, we managed to escape the men who were chasing us and get away successfully.
The current forced me to let go of her hand!
But while crossing the river further up
But ran into the men sent by the Saitou family
She fought the current for a while and finally made it to the bank.

I FAILED TO PROTECT YOU..
I'M SORRY, KASUGA

I CAN'T GO BACK TO THAT HOUSE AGAIN.

I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT SHE ALTERED HER MEMORY OF THE SITUATION


WE HAVE TO SOLVE THIS MYSTERY BEFORE THE WALL WILL DISAPPEAR.

THERE'S A HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT'S REAL AND

!

Just who... is right?

WHAT ABOUT THAT DOOR?
ARE THERE ANY CLUES THAT COULD SHED SOME LIGHT ON...

COULD THIS BE—
Wah~ He really came~!
ピピピピ

SHIMA...
JUST AS YOU PREDICTED~
WHICH MEANS, THIS IS
KAIRI!
The Moukyoudou—?!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HIRUKO

Yamekai Kenbun

Scanner: Lelei

Translator: Sagami

Proofreader: ArgentSylph

Editor: Nocturnal

Quality Checker: Kalendel

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Seventeenth Night Walls (part 2)

A GIRL BY THE NAME OF SAITOU KASUGA ASKED FOR MY HELP TO GET RID OF A WALL BETWEEN HER AND HER LOVER, SO I ENTERED THIS DREAM.
BUT WHY'S THE MOUKYOUDOU IN THIS DREAM AS WELL?

I FOUND HIYAMA WHILE I WAS OUT ON A WALK SEVERAL DAYS AGO.
SO I BROUGHT HIM BACK TO THE MOUKYOU-DOU
BROUGHT HIM BACK
SO HE ENTERED ONE OF THE ROOMS?
YEAH
YOU WANT TO KNOW HIS STORY?
THOUGH I DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE PRIVATE MATTERS OF MY GUESTS
HIYAMA

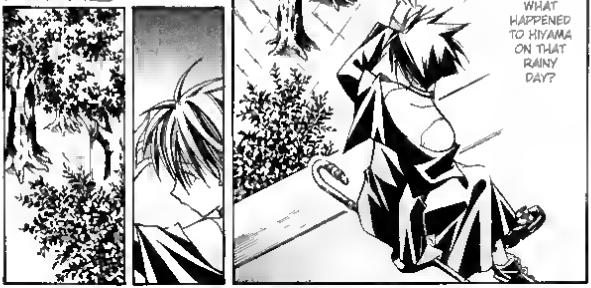
YOU'RE IN KASUGA'S NIGHTMARE RIGHT NOW
AND AT THE SAME TIME, IN ONE OF THE ROOMS AT THE MOU-KYOUDOU

THE ROOMS WILL GIVE FORM TO THE FEELINGS OF ITS VISITORS AND MAKE THEM REAL,

AND THE "FEELING" REFERRED TO HERE...
is "desire".

SO EVEN THE WEATHER HERE
THIS SUNNY DAY
IS ONE OF YOUR DESIRES?

I DON'T HAVE ANY DESIRES . .
THAT'S ENOUGH! YOU'RE LYING!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? WHY DO YOU WANT SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
SUDDENLY, A MAN APPEARS AND FILLS HER IN
float
AND NO WAY TO GET RID OF THE WALL THAT RESULTED FROM THE DIFFERENCE
BUT UNLESS HE'S RID OF HIS DESIRES THERE'S NO WAY TO BE RID OF THIS DIFFERENCE
MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO ENTER THE ROOMS LOSE SIGHT OF REALITY
WHAT KASUGA SAID WAS THE TRUTH


JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO HIYAMA ON THAT RAINY DAY?

WHAT'S THAT?

Drag... Drag...

Drag...
!
Drag Drag
YOU'RE BACK, HIRUKO

KASUGA, SINCE THIS NIGHTMARE REFLECTS WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY... I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
...
PLEASE TELL ME ...
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER-WARDS...
BECAUSE OF THE RAIN HIYAMA SLIPPED AND FELL—
AND WAS CAPTURED BY THE PEOPLE SENT BY MY FAMILY. AFTER BEING BEATEN FOR A LONG TIME—
SPLAT
How dare you do such a thing after all the Saitou family has done for you!
Think of who you are!
STRIKE
STRIKE

You've ruined the family name with your actions!
Stop it.
Stop!
But you're really unlucky.
If you don't marry into the Sakura family, we'll go broke, and we won't have enough to eat.
...I'm sure you've heard it often.
You should've prayed to the gods first.
You two probably would've escaped if it had been sunny.
Pray to the gods like this!
Bllow

THEY BEAT HIYAMA UP BADLY AND THEN THREW HIM INTO THE WOODS
SHIMA FOUND HIM AND BROUGHT HIM BACK TO THE MOUKYOU-DOU
I SEE
KASUGA... I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK——

I——
Gap
Huh?

YOU SAW IT YOURSELF. I'M NOT INJURED,
BECAUSE IT WAS SUNNY THAT DAY. AND I NEVER RAN INTO THOSE MEN
THAT'S THE RESULT OF YOUR DESIRE
!

twitch
KASUGA
GO BACK!
IF YOU DON'T GET RID OF YOUR DESIRE YOU'LL NEVER SEE KASUGA AGAIN
FACE YOURSELF ON THAT DAY
AND THEN...
RE-MEMBER WHAT REALLY HAPPENED HIYAMA
drag
drag
drag
drag
drag
drag
THAT'S
!
haha
Hi, Misk
Hi, really Misk
drag...

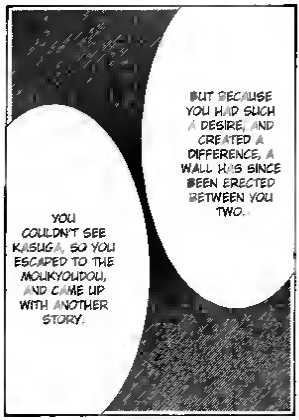
"If it had been sunny, you probably would've escaped"

Why did I hang such a large doll to pray for good weather!
hahaha...
JUST LOOK! IT'S A SUNNY DAY!
I DIDN'T GET CAUGHT BY ANYONE!
THAT'S RIGHT
THAT'S WHAT HAP-PENED
IF IT WASN'T A SUNNY DAY, I'LL NEVER...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW?
YOU CREATED THIS SUNNY DAY WITH YOUR DESIRE.
I WANT TO BE WITH KASUGA
I WANT TO BE BY HER SIDE FOREVER...

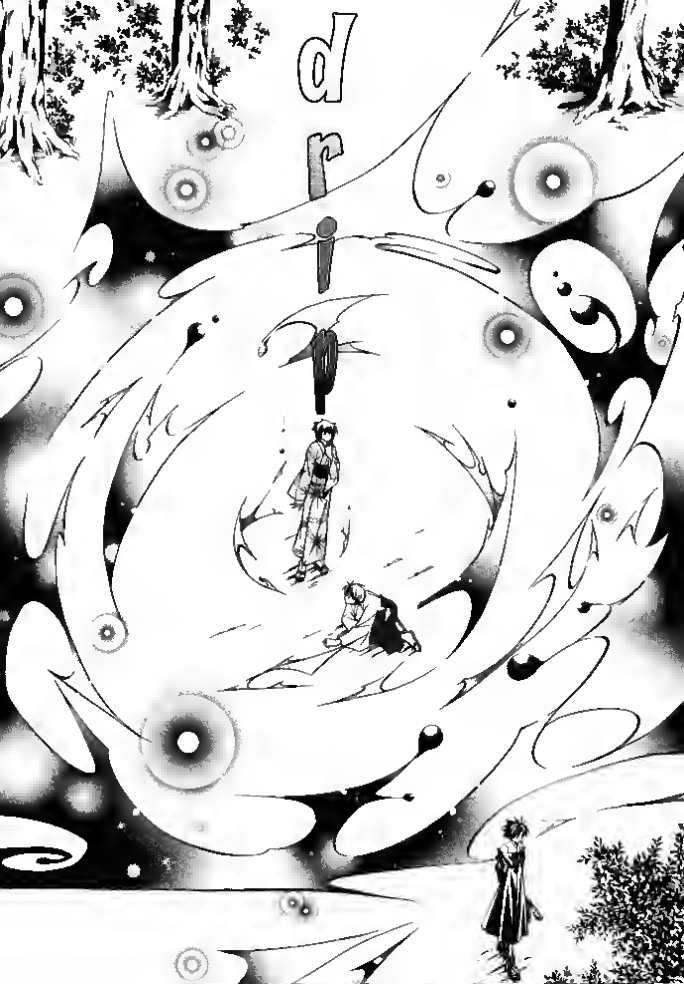
WAS THAT WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND WHEN YOU ENTERED THE ROOM?
YOU KNEW THAT KASUGA WOULD MISS YOU, AND WOULD DREAM OF MEETING AGAIN, SO YOU WANTED TO SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPE IN THE DREAM.

AH!
UGH!
KAORI PROBABLY KNEW THAT HIYAM'S DESIRE MIXED WITH KASUGA'S DREAM, THE WILL WOULD CAUSE HER NIGHT-MARES, AND I'D BE INVITED IN...


BUT BECAUSE YOU HAD SUCH A DESIRE, AND CREATED A DIFFERENCE, A WALL HAS SINCE BEEN ERECTED BETWEEN YOU TWO.
YOU COULDN'T SEE KASUGA, SO YOU ESCAPED TO THE MOUKYOUDOU, AND CAME UP WITH ANOTHER STORY.

OH... IT'S RED IT'S REALLY RED...
MY BODY...!
THE BLOOD IS COVERING MY EYES!
Real
#9 LUB.

HIS DESIRE IS STARTING TO FALL APART...
glub
drip
...HOWEVER,
glub
glub
AS LONG AS HIYAMA SEES HER LIKE THIS,
IS IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO MEET HER AGAIN IN REALITY?
glub
glub
HIYAMA.
ARE YOU
glub


d
r
i

HI...
YAMA...
We finally meet again.

I'M SORRY, KASUGA
I'M ALWAYS DOING THINGS TO MAKE YOU UNHAPPY.
NO.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN BY MY SIDE.
HEY
HIYAMA

KASUGA
HIS DESIRE IS MELTING AWAY
THE ROOM IS BACK TO IT'S TRUE FORM.

IF IT WASN'T A SUNNY DAY, I'LL NEVER AGAIN
HIYAMA...
swoosh...
HE WAS BADLY INJURED, AND WAS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH WHEN HE REACHED THE MOUKYOUDOU

HE DIED SHORTLY AFTER HE ENTERED THE ROOM
BUT HE WANTED TO, HIDE THE TRUTH AND CONTINUED DREAMING THAT IT WAS A SUNNY DAY.
SO THAT HE COULD STAY BY YOUR SIDE
BUT HIS THOUGHTS REMAINED BEHIND
SO AFTER HIYAMA DIED, THE ROOM CONTINUED TO GIVE FORM TO HIS DESIRE

THAT WASN'T A DREAM
BUT HIS FEELINGS STILL CAME BACK TO VISIT ME...

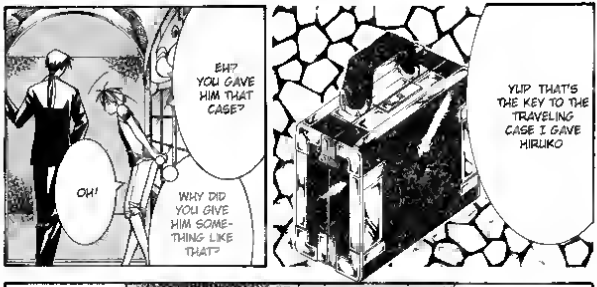
HIYAMA...

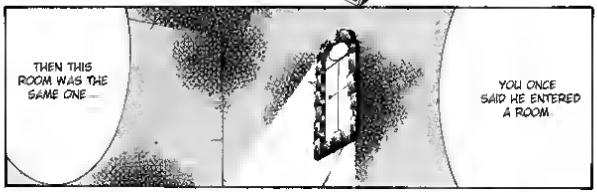
THE LAST TIME I SAW HIYAMA, I KNEW THAT HE MIGHT DIE.

Thank you...

SURELY YOU DON'T PLAN TO LEAVE THAT BEHIND AGAIN?
Swoosh
THIS IS TROUBLE-SOME...

AS THE ONE IN CHARGE OF THE KEYS TO THE ROOMS, I GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO TAKE WHAT YOU LEFT BEHIND IN THAT ROOM
AGAIN?
HE LEFT IT HERE BEFORE?
Is it something related to his desires?


YUP. THAT'S THE KEY TO THE TRAVELING CASE I GAVE HIRUKO
EH? YOU GAVE HIM THAT CASE?
WHY DID YOU GIVE HIM SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
OH!


YOU ONCE SAID HE ENTERED A ROOM
THEN THIS ROOM WAS THE SAME ONE...

I DON'T GET IT
"HOW'S HIRUKO?"
THAT CASE
DOESN'T HE WANT TO

SINCE YOU'VE FINALLY RETURNED PLEASE TAKE THAT WITH YOU
I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIYAMA'S BODY
I'm fine now.
slam

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR ME HIYAMA
Goodbye...
It's time to wake up

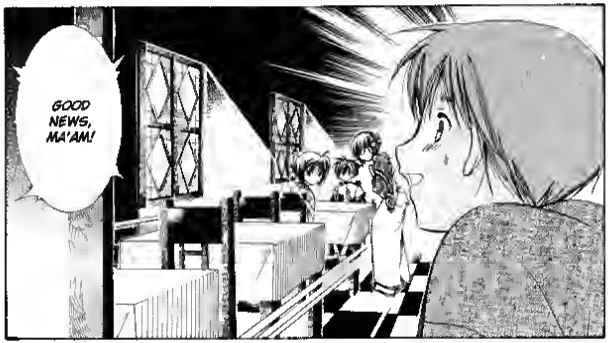
SO THAT'S WHY YOU DREAMED OF MEETING HIM...
TO THINK THAT HIYAMA WOULD DIE ON THE DAY YOU ELOPED, WHILE YOU WERE APART
IT'S SO SAD.

SO I HAVE NO REGRETS

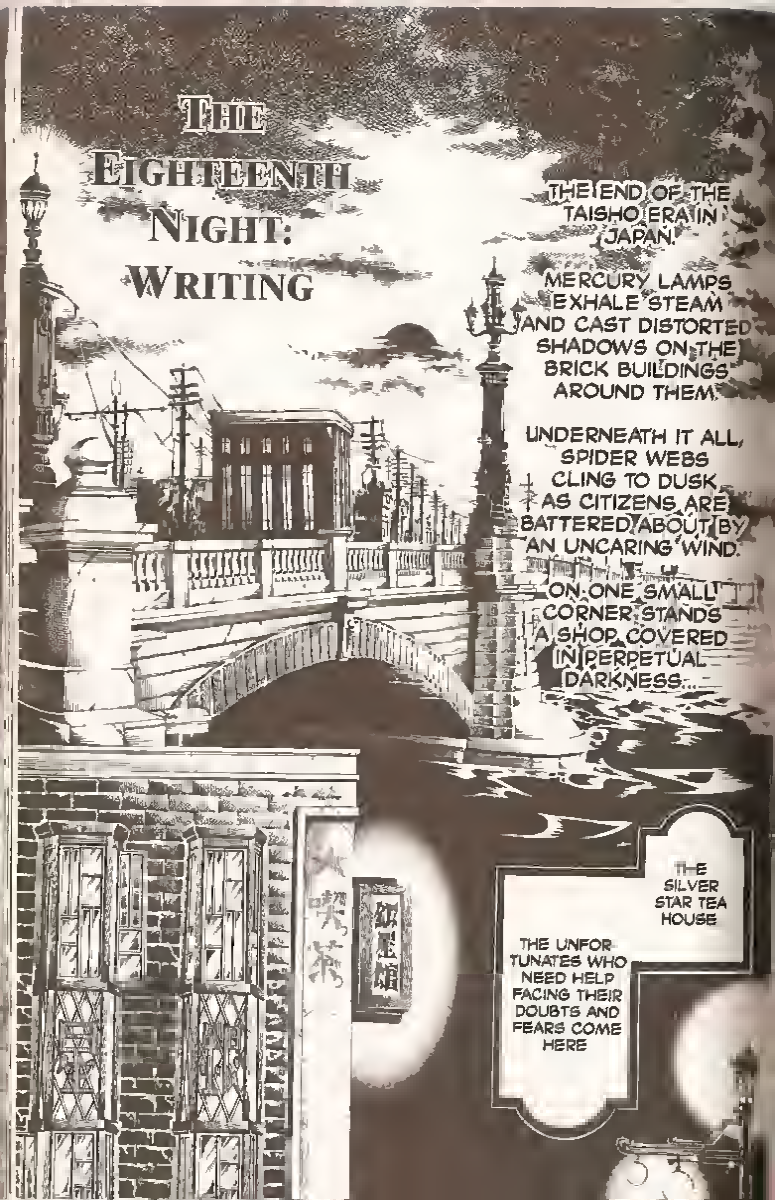
BUT HIYAMA TRIED VERY HARD, AND I SAW HIM ONE LAST TIME AND SAID GOODBYE TO HIM.

IF YOUR FATHER'S BUSINESS HAD NOT FAILED, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SEPARATED, AND WOULD HAVE LIVED TOGETHER HAPPILY—
I REALLY FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.
KASUGA
WHAT A GENTLE AND KIND MAN YOUR LOVER MUST'VE BEEN.
SO, ARE YOU GOING TO MARRY THE SON OF THE SAKURA FAMILY?
YES...
IT'S WHAT I'VE GOT TO DO TO SAVE THE SAITOU FAMILY FORTUNE
BAM
銀

OH.... WHO ARE YOU?
HE'S MY FAMILY'S SERVANT.


GOOD NEWS, MA'AM!

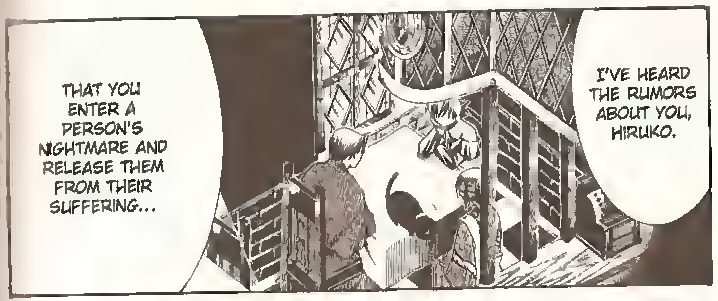
The Master found gold in his mine in Manchuria!!


THE EIGHTEENTH NIGHT: WRITING
THE END OF THE TAISHO ERA IN JAPAN.
MERCURY LAMPS EXHALE STEAM AND CAST DISTORTED SHADOWS ON THE BRICK BUILDINGS AROUND THEM.
UNDERNEATH IT ALL, SPIDER WEBS CLING TO DUSK AS CITIZENS ARE BATTERED ABOUT BY AN UNCARING WIND.
ON ONE SMALL CORNER STANDS A SHOP COVERED IN PERPETUAL DARKNESS...
THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE
THE UNFORTUNATES WHO NEED HELP FACING THEIR DOUBTS AND FEARS COME HERE

YES. COME IN.
AND YOU ARE?
IS THIS IT?
WHY IS THAT?
I'M THE OWNER, MIZUKI ASAHINA. BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO REMEMBER THAT.
THE SHOP WITH THE BAKU...?
BECAUSE IT'S BEST TO NOT COME BACK FOR SECONDS.
CLATTER
HA HA. I SEE.

HIS NAME IS INRUKO.
THEY SEEK AID FROM ONE WHO IS NO LONGER HUMAN.
MEOW~
HE IS THE NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR
HE IS A BAKU HE EATS DREAMS
THE SILVER STAR CLIENTELE IS HIS AND HIS ALONE. HE WALKS WITH THEM IN THEIR DREAMS AND INVESTIGATES THEIR NIGHTMARES.

THANK YOU.
BUT THE NEXT INSTALLMENT WILL BE THE FINALE.
THE SAD DOG
Shigetaka Udou
YOU WRITE THE SAD DOG SERIALIZATION. I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO READING IT.
NOT WANTING TO DISAPPOINT EXPECTATIONS AS HIS STUDENT, I PUT MY ALL INTO THIS SERIALIZATION.
IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE MY REVERED MASTER KAGAMI DIED...
OH ...
THAT'S EXACTLY IT.
YOU'VE EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS WITH YOUR WORK, MR UDOU.

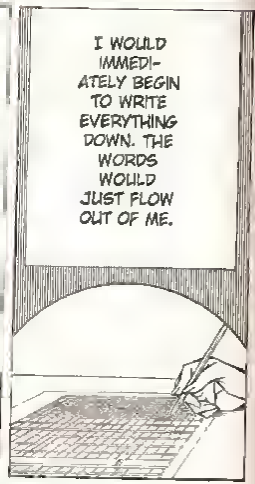

I'VE HEARD THE RUMORS ABOUT YOU, HIRUKO.
THAT YOU ENTER A PERSON'S NIGHTMARE AND RELEASE THEM FROM THEIR SUFFERING...

PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF ME.
HMM?
I SEE.
YES. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE NIGHTMARE.

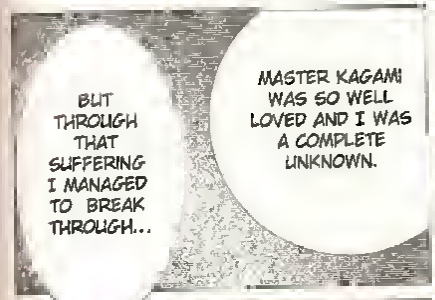
OH! YOU'RE THE FAMOUS—!
MY NAME IS SHIGETAKA UDOU.

I WOULD READ AS I WENT DOWN THE SPIRAL, SAVORING EACH WORD, AND THEN I WOULD WAKE.
IN IT THERE IS A LONG SPIRAL OF WORDS LEADING DOWN. YES, IT IS THE TEXT OF THE SAD DOG.

WHO WOULD BELIEVE IT WAS JUST A DREAM?
THAT IS HOW I'VE SPENT THE PAST TWO YEARS.

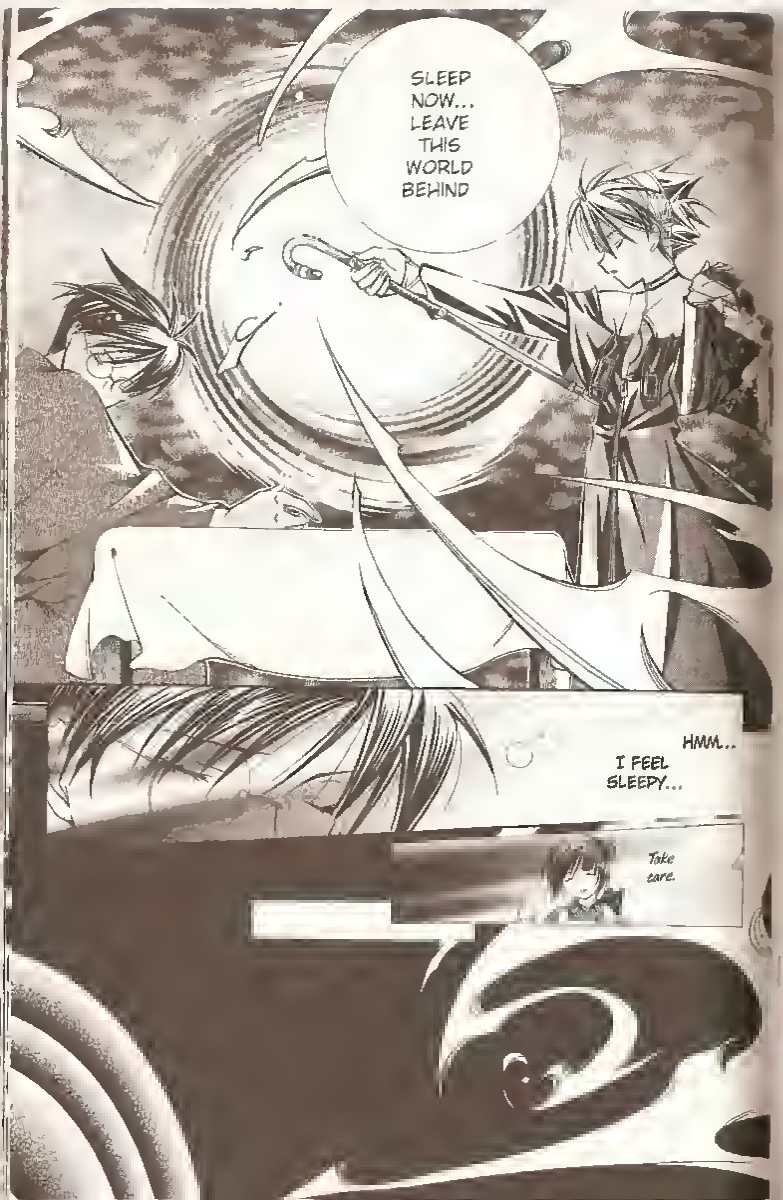

I WOULD IMMEDI-ATELY BEGIN TO WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN. THE WORDS WOULD JUST FLOW OUT OF ME.

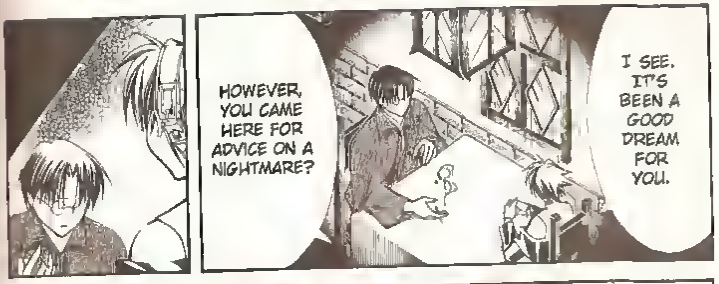
IT HAS BEEN AN OBSESSION ...
HEH HEH

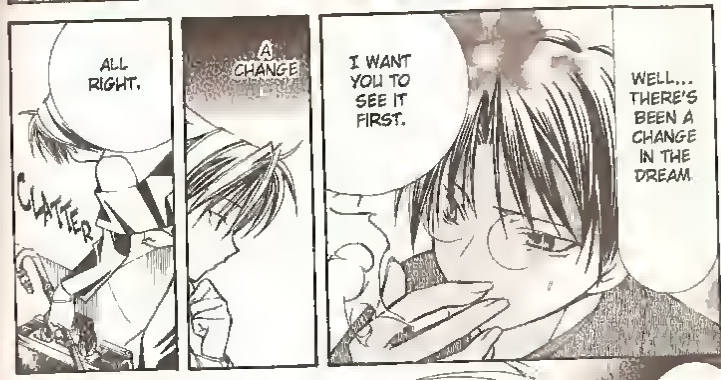

BUT THROUGH THAT SUFFERING I MANAGED TO BREAK THROUGH...
MASTER KAGAMI WAS SO WELL LOVED AND I WAS A COMPLETE UNKNOWN.

...HE-MY OWN TALENT BLOSSOMED!
THAT IS THE CRUX OF MY DREAM!

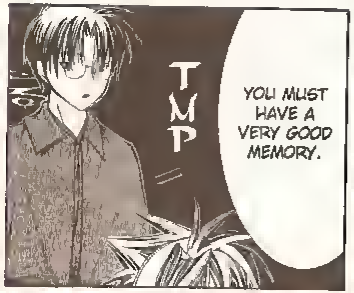
I STUDIED MASTER KAGAMI'S WORKS MORE INTENSELY THAN ANYONE ELSE...
AS HIS PUPIL, MY WORK HAD TO HONOR HIS NAME!

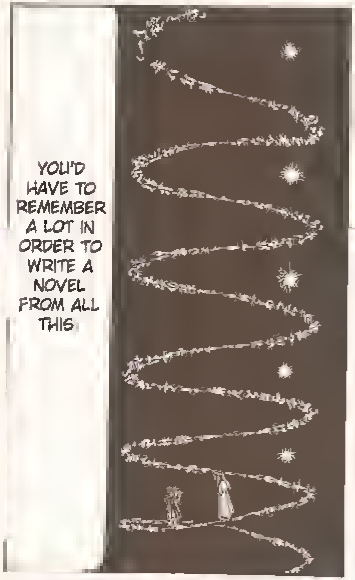

SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND
HMM... I FEEL SLEEPY...
Take care.


I SEE. IT'S BEEN A GOOD DREAM FOR YOU.
HOWEVER, YOU CAME HERE FOR ADVICE ON A NIGHTMARE?

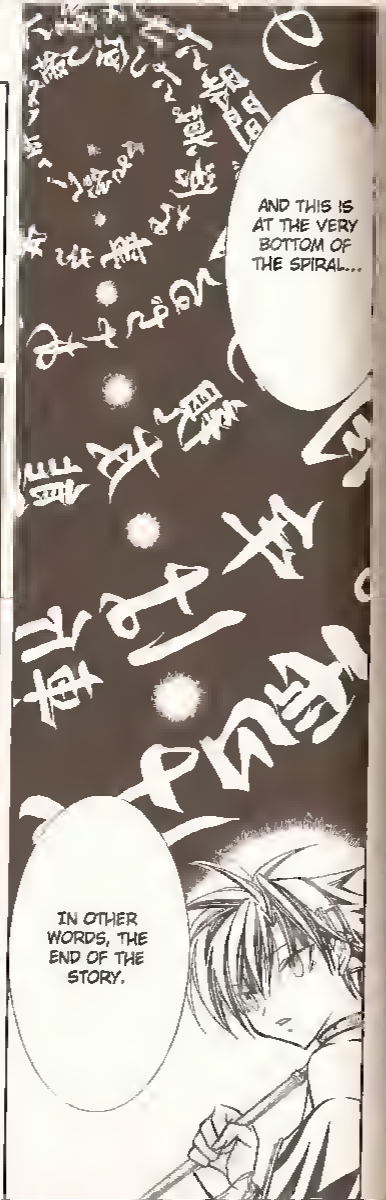

WELL... THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN THE DREAM.
I WANT YOU TO SEE IT FIRST.
A CHANGE
ALL RIGHT.
CHATTER

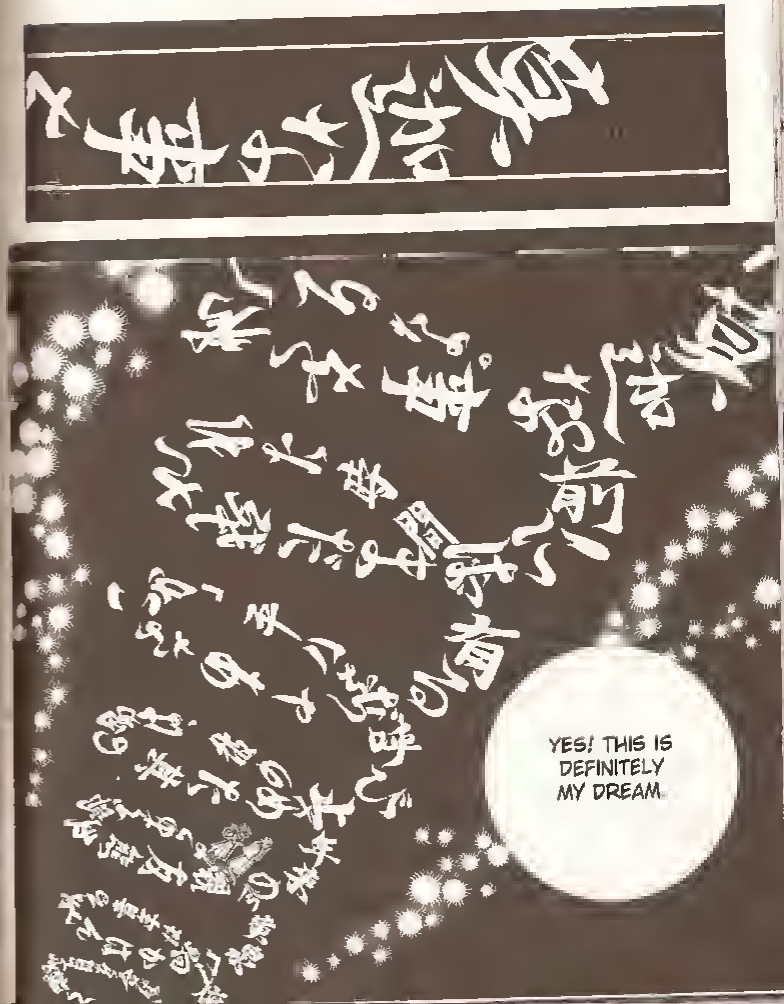
THEN I WILL SEND YOU TO SLEEP.
WHEN I'M FINISHED, I'LL USE THIS TO TAKE THE NIGHTMARE FROM YOU.
OKAY?
WOOSH!


TMP
YOU MUST HAVE A VERY GOOD MEMORY.


YOU'D HAVE TO REMEMBER A LOT IN ORDER TO WRITE A NOVEL FROM ALL THIS.

TMP
EXACTLY ...

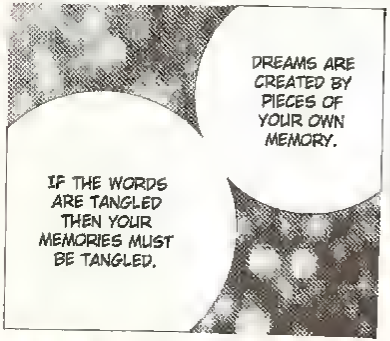

AND THIS IS AT THE VERY BOTTOM OF THE SPIRAL...
IN OTHER WORDS, THE END OF THE STORY.


YES! THIS IS DEFINITELY MY DREAM.

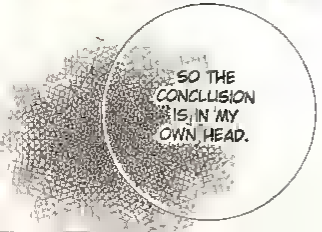
...BECOMES A NIGHTMARE!!
WHERE MY PERFECT DREAM...
IT'S THE ENDING!
HEH, ARROGANT BOY
SHUP
BUT LOOK THERE!
...ARE TANGLED.
THE FINAL TURNS OF THE SPIRAL

I POURED MY SOUL INTO IT, SACRIFICING MYSELF—
BUT I HAVE WORKED ON THESE PARTS FOR SO LONG THAT I KNOW THEM BY HEART.
YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND!
THE FEELING OF GIVING EVERYTHING OF MYSELF FOR THIS SERIALIZATION.
OH, I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY, MR. UDOU.

I SEE.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO PESSIMISTIC.

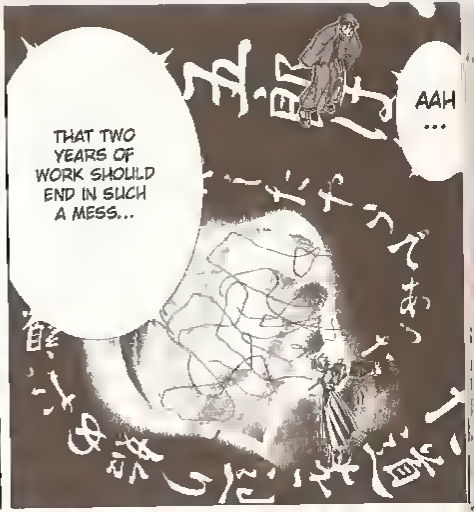

DREAMS ARE CREATED BY PIECES OF YOUR OWN MEMORY.
IF THE WORDS ARE TANGLED THEN YOUR MEMORIES MUST BE TANGLED.

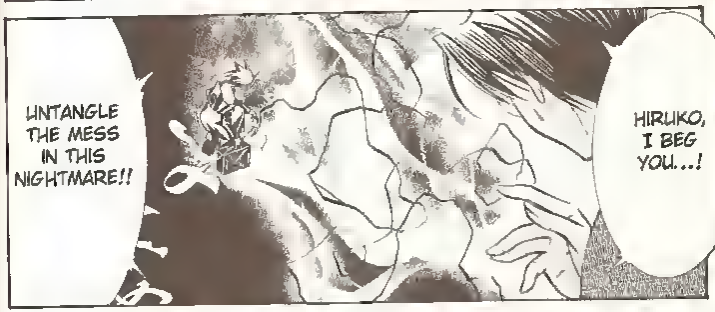
MY MEMORY...?


SO THE CONCLUSION IS, IN MY OWN HEAD.

IT'S BECAUSE MY TALENT HAS BEEN THWARTED.
THE TANGLE HAS UNDER-MINED ALL THE FAITH I HAD IN MYSELF.
HOW CAN THIS BE?!

ALL MY WORK UNTIL NOW HAS BEEN FUTILE
SINCE I CAN'T READ IT, IT CAN NEVER BE FINISHED.

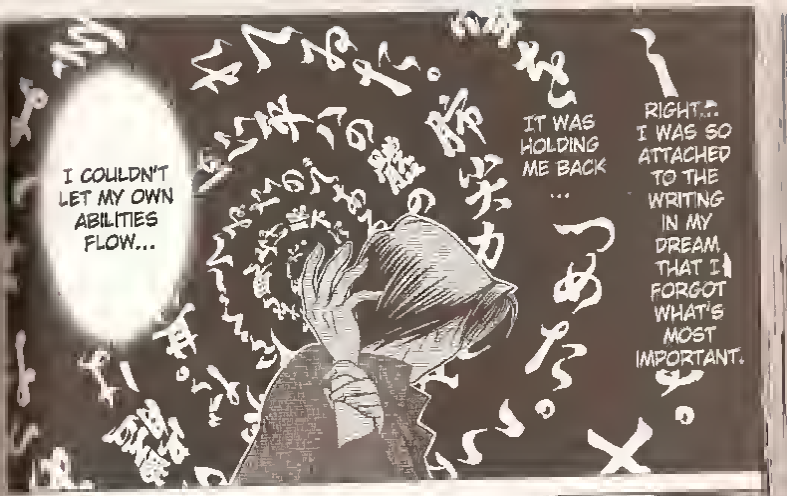

AAH...
THAT TWO YEARS OF WORK SHOULD END IN SUCH A MESS...


UNTANGLE THE MESS IN THIS NIGHTMARE!!
HIRUKO, I BEG YOU...!

AND DON'T YOU KNOW WHY?
BUT MY HANDS SHAKE EVERY TIME I TRY.

HAVE YOU TRIED TO YOURSELF?
OF COURSE!

ONLY I CAN BRING BACK MY MEMORIES.
...AND RETURN TO MY NORMAL SELF!


I COULDN'T LET MY OWN ABILITIES FLOW...
IT WAS HOLDING ME BACK ...
RIGHT... I WAS SO ATTACHED TO THE WRITING IN MY DREAM, THAT I FORGOT WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT.

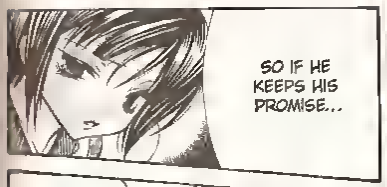
TO SATISFY ALL YOUR READERS' EXPECTATIONS!
THAT ONCE YOU REMEMBER, YOU'LL WRITE A MAGNIFICENT ENDING TO YOUR SERIALIZATION...
BUT PROMISE ME ONE THING ..
I CAN ONLY HELP YOU UNTANGLE IT.
LET'S DO IT.
THANK YOU I WILL.

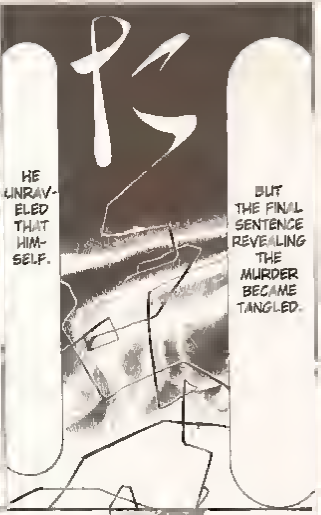
I'LL GO BACK TO SLEEP IN MY OWN ROOM.
YOU CAN SEE IT WHEN IT'S PUBLISHED.
I LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT INSTALLMENT.
FOOSH
TIME TO WAKE UP.
NGH!
FINALLY ...!
MY BODY IS SO NERVOUS WITH THE PROSPECT OF THE NOVEL'S COMPLETION.
I CAN'T STOP SHAKING.
HA HA HA HA!
THANK YOU, HIRUKO!
THE WORDS.
MY MEMORIES ...
...ARE TAKING SHAPE...

the one who killed me
AAH ...!
KILLED ...?
ME ...?
BEEP
BEEP
HOW WAS TONIGHT'S MEAL?

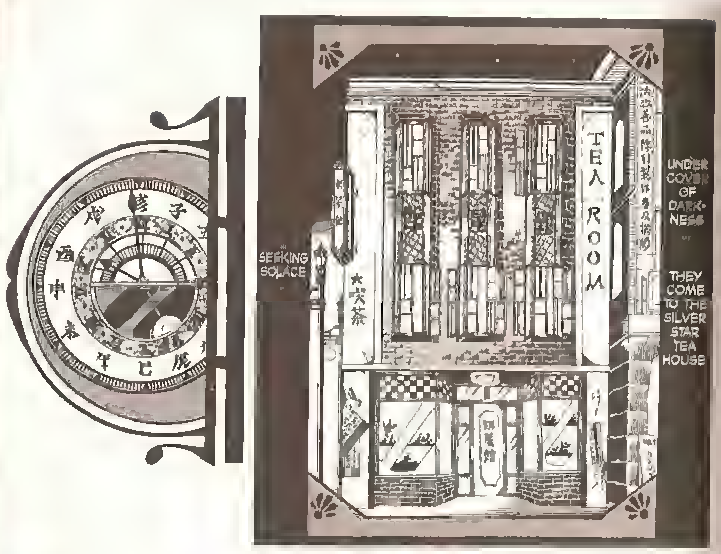
YES, I WONDER HOW HE'LL FEEL AS HE WRITES IT.
I CAN'T WAIT TO FIND OUT HOW THE STORY ENDS.
HEH HEH, I WONDER IF HE'LL KEEP HIS PROMISE?
HM ...
AH.
TMP
TMP

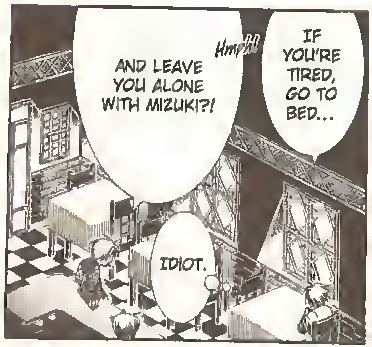
I HAVE NO USE FOR THIS ORIGINAL
ALONG WITH MY MEMORY OF THE FACTS...
THE STORY IS BURIED DEEP IN MY MIND.
...TO REPRESS HIS MEMORY OF THE TRUTH.
HE REALLY DID POUR HIS SOUL INTO IT, SACRIFICING HIMSELF...
IT TOOK TWO YEARS FOR THE DREAM TO REVEAL THE TRUTH.
AFTERWARDS, MR UDOU STARTED TO BELIEVE IT WAS HIS OWN WORK.
YES! WHAT A WONDERFUL PIECE OF WORK!
YOU WOULD HAVE CAUSED SUCH A STIR WITH THIS WORK!
FWIP
FWIP
MASTER KAGAMI?
SAME AS ALWAYS..
HEH HEH
SUCH A SWEET MAN..
BUT IT GAVE ME TIME TO MEMORIZE IT ALL
IT TOOK A WHILE TO POISON YOU WITHOUT RAISING ANY SUSPICIONS..
FWIK
BUT IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT REALLY. YOU CREATED SOMETHING SO FASCINATING THAT IT DROVE ME TO OBSESSION.
THE SAD DOG.. THE STORY THAT YOU WROTE IN SECRET!

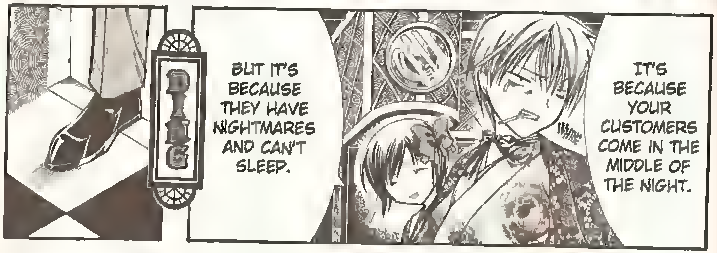




EITHER WAY, HE IS RUINED...







Q6. Hiruko and Mizuki sent a letter to their favorite daily radio show.
For what segment and what prize did they win?
And what name did they use as an alias?

Q7: Mizuki loves ribbons. What amazing thing has she made them out of?

Q8 Hiruko and Mizuki once had a big fight over what they thought of Formalin (the cane) and didn't speak for two months. What does Hiruko think of Formalin?

Q9: When HiFumi comes back from a Friday night out on the town, he reeks of something strange. What is it?

Q10: Hiruko loves soda. He wants to collect soda marbles to conquer the world.
How will he conquer the world with marbles?
How many marbles would he need?

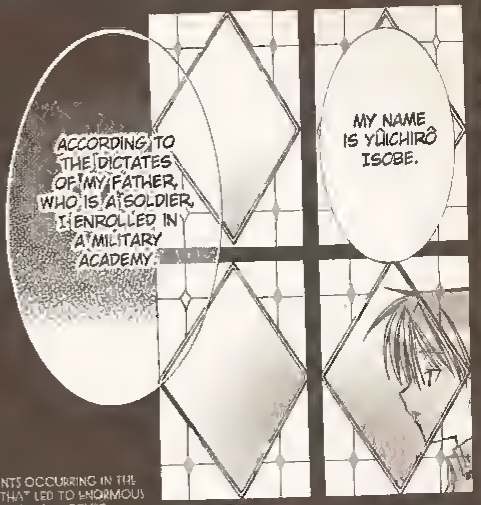
Hmph!
YOU'RE NOT SORRY! YOU DON'T EVEN LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN PAIN.
?
OW!
OH, PARDON! OW OW OW!
?!
YES, THAT'S WHY I'VE COME HERE.
I CAN'T CHANGE IT!
AS YOU CAN SEE, MY EXPRESSION DOESN'T CHANGE...
TELL ME ABOUT IT.
THAT DREAM?
ALL BECAUSE OF THAT DREAM..

Come back tomorrow afternoon!
That's mean.
I'M SLEEPY!
GO HOME!!
IS THIS THE SHOP WITH THE BAKU?
ARE YOU HIRUKO?
HA HA HA! YOU'RE EVEN FUNNIER THAN I EXPECTED.
THIS IS HIRUKO.
THAT'S OUR LODGER HIFUMI MISUMI.
WHUP
GRIND
HEY! WHO ARE YOU MISTAKING FOR THAT SHRIMP?!

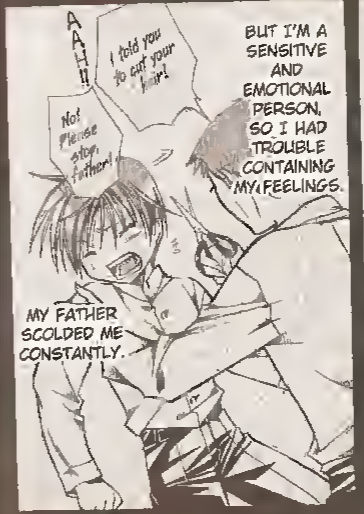
IT WAS AS IF MY LONGING TO BE STOIC HAD COME TRUE THROUGH THE DREAM AND CAST A SPELL ON ME.

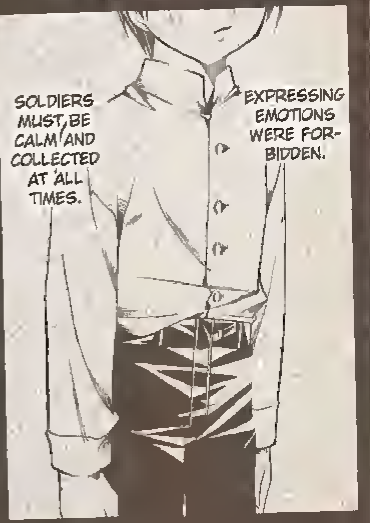
IT WAS A BLESSING IN MANY WAYS.

I COME FROM A CLAN OF WARRIORS WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE MILITARY SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY SINCE THE MEIJI RESTORATION. MY FATHER RULED WITH AN IRON FIST FROM MY YOUTH.



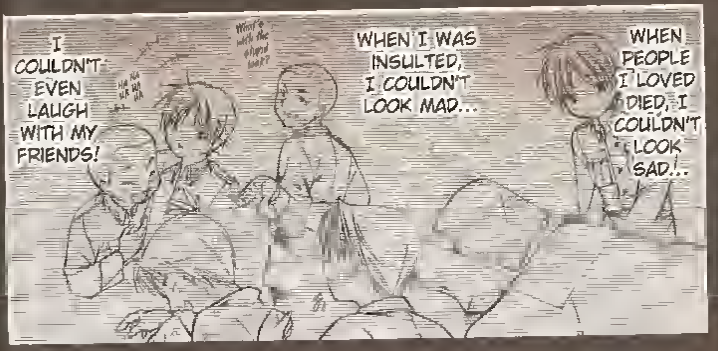
MEIJI RESTORATION—A CHAIN OF EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY THAT LED TO ENORMOUS CHANGES IN JAPAN'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE


AAH!!
I told you to cut your hair!
No! Please stop, Father!
BUT I'M A SENSITIVE AND EMOTIONAL PERSON, SO I HAD TROUBLE CONTAINING MY FEELINGS.
MY FATHER SCOLDED ME CONSTANTLY.



EVERY DAY WAS LIKE THIS UNTIL I HAD THE DREAM.

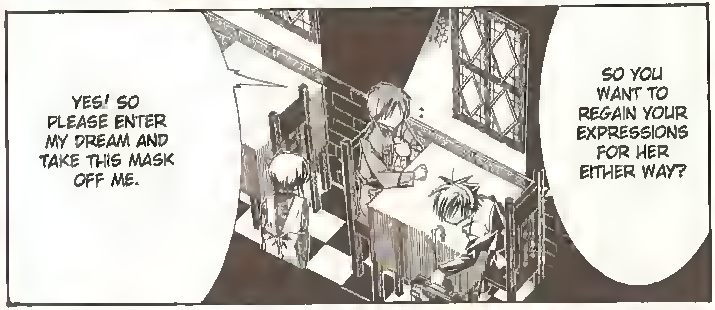
PERHAPS THE SPELL WAS TOO STRONG AND NOW CAN'T BE UNDONE.
IT'S BEEN YEARS NOW SINCE I'VE BEEN EXPRESSIONLESS.
NOW ALL SHE SAYS IS TO SHOW HER MY SMILING FACE.
WHEN I TOLD HER HOW I FELT, SHE DID NOT CARE FOR MY EMOTIONLESS FACE...
THE WORST PART IS THAT THERE'S A GIRL THAT I'VE LOVED FOR MANY YEARS.
B-BUT...
YES...
SCARED TO OPEN IT?
IT'S HER REPLY... BUT...
WHAT'S THAT?

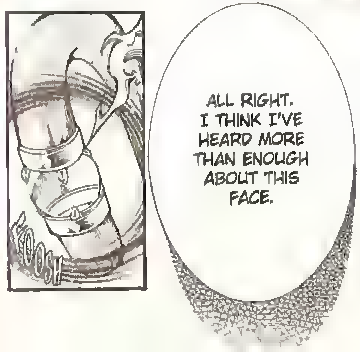


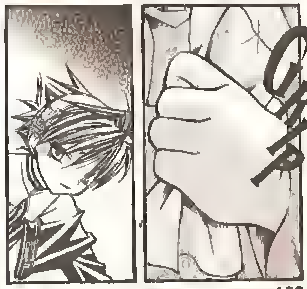
AFTER A WHILE, THE DREAM BECAME A NIGHTMARE.

SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.

AND IF SHE HAS ACCEPTED ME, I WANT TO COURT HER WITH MY REAL FACE.
IF SHE HAS REJECTED ME, I WANT TO ASK HER AGAIN BUT WITH MY REAL FACE.


YES! SO PLEASE ENTER MY DREAM AND TAKE THIS MASK OFF ME.
SO YOU WANT TO REGAIN YOUR EXPRESSIONS FOR HER EITHER WAY?


ALL RIGHT. I THINK I'VE HEARD MORE THAN ENOUGH ABOUT THIS FACE.

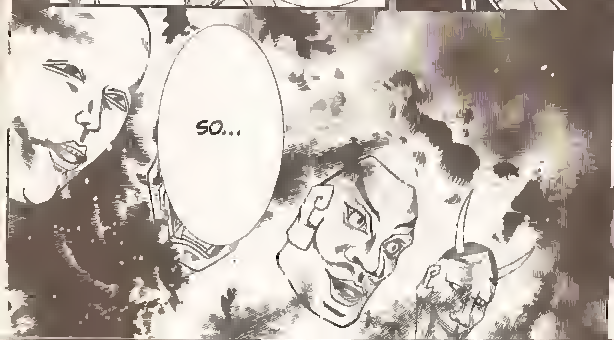

GRIP

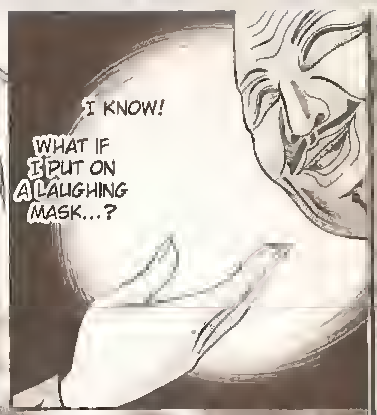
I CAN FINALLY EXPRESS MYSELF!
NO.
IT'S OFF! YOU DID IT!
FILL UP
?!
YOU'RE STILL EXPRESSION-LESS.
YOU MEAN I'LL STAY LIKE THIS?!
MAYBE THE MASK BURNED INTO YOUR FACE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.
IT CAN'T BE!

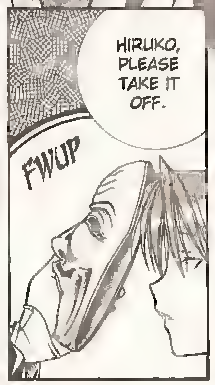
MAYBE YOU CAN REMOVE IT AND RELEASE ME FROM THIS CURSE.
I WANTED TO HIDE BEHIND THIS MASK... BUT NOW I CAN'T TAKE IT OFF.

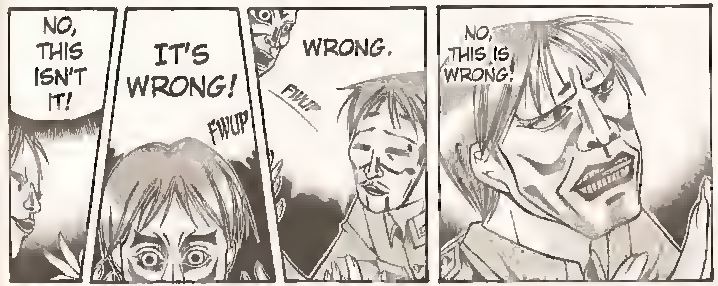
I DON'T WANT TO BORROW ANOTHER EXPRESSION FROM A NOH MASK!

I NEED ONE MADE BY MY TRUE FACE.





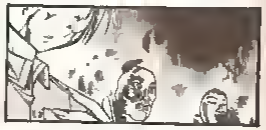


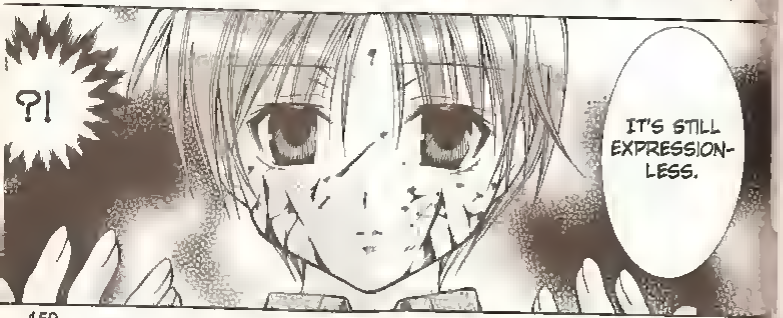


RIP

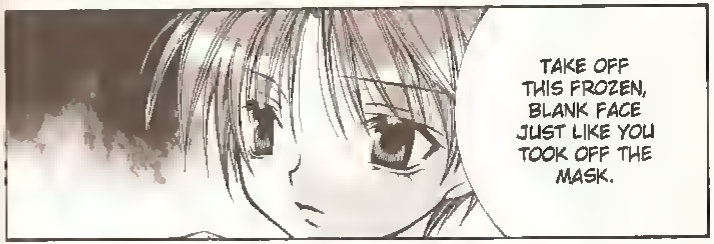
NOW I CAN FINALLY...!
OH! THANK YOU, HIRUKO!
NO.

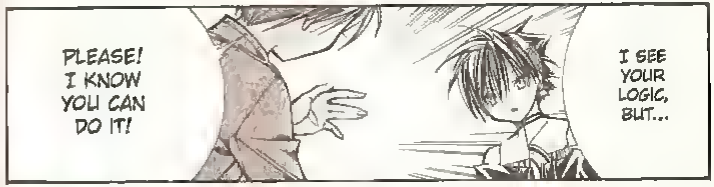
THERE'S A FACE UNDER THE FACE.

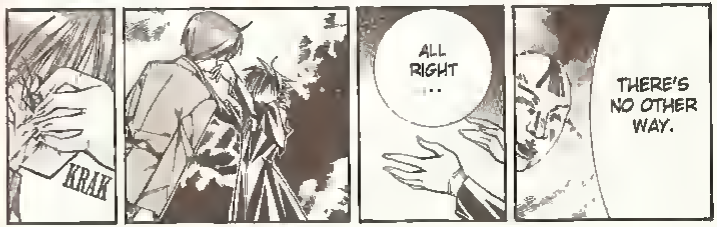



?!
IT'S STILL EXPRESSION-LESS.

PLEASE TAKE OFF MY FACE.


TAKE OFF THIS FROZEN, BLANK FACE JUST LIKE YOU TOOK OFF THE MASK.


PLEASE! I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT!
I SEE YOUR LOGIC, BUT...

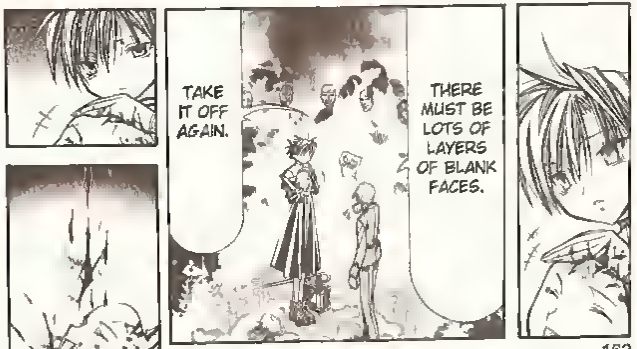

KRAK
ALL RIGHT...
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY.

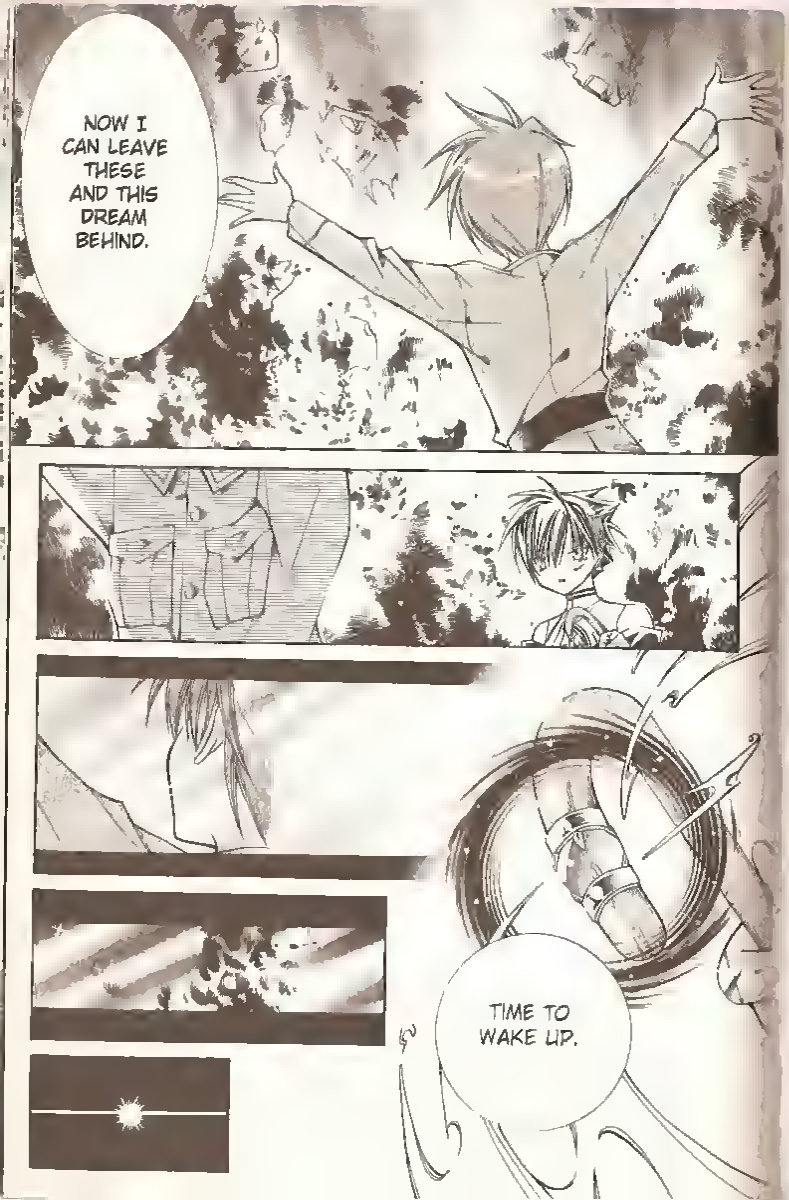
...
I SUPPOSE
...
I'LL DO WHAT YOU SAID, ALL RIGHT?
R.I.P
HA HA! YOU RELEASED ME!
THANK YOU, HIRUKO!
LAUGHING?
ME?
THIS IS YOUR TRUE EXPRESSION, YŪICHIRŌ.
HA HA HA HA
FINALLY! YOU'RE SMILING.

PLEASE! THERE'S NO OTHER WAY!
SHAKE
SHAKE
PLEASE ...!
I SEE. WELL, IT'S BEEN YEARS, SO MAYBE MY REAL FACE IS DEEPER DOWN.
PLEASE TAKE IT OFF AGAIN.
...
!
AGAIN? I'M BORED.

ARGH! IT DIDN'T WORK! I DON'T GET IT!
OH... THIS IS NO GOOD...
BUT IF WE DIG DEEPER ...
AGAIN, PLEASE!
RIP
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
NO, AGAIN.
AGAIN, PLEASE!
RIP

JOYFUL?
YES, I CAN SEE YOUR JOYFUL EXPRESSION...
STRANGE... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
THAT'S WHAT I LOOK LIKE WHEN I SMILE?


TAKE IT OFF AGAIN.
THERE MUST BE LOTS OF LAYERS OF BLANK FACES.


NOW I CAN LEAVE THESE AND THIS DREAM BEHIND.
TIME TO WAKE UP.

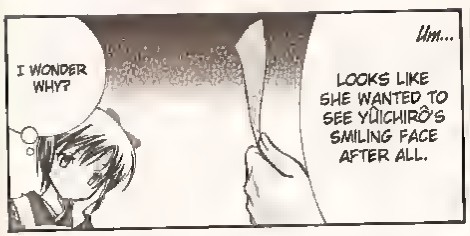
IT'S NO LONGER A PROBLEM OF EXPRESSION.
YÛICHIRÔ, THERE AREN'T ANY MORE.
I HAD YOU TAKE THEM ALL OFF.
NO, THIS IS FINE.
GRIP
RIGHT?
THERE'S NOTHING TO HOLD ME BACK.
I'M FREE NOW. I'M A BLANK SLATE.

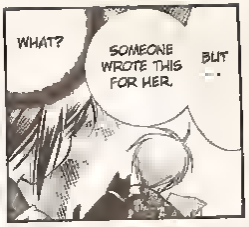
THEY WERE EXPRESSING WHAT HE WAS FEELING... THEY WERE FULL OF EMOTION.
BUT EACH FACE THAT WAS REMOVED EXPRESSED AN EMOTION.
WHEN YÛICHIRÔ'S FACE CAME OFF, HE DIDN'T SMILE...
YES.
HIRUKO ...
...AND LOST ALL OF HIS EMOTIONS.
BUT HE WENT TOO FAR...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND
BUT AFTER SO MANY YEARS HE THOUGHT ALL HE HAD WERE LAYERS OF EXPRESSIONLESS FACES AND WAS JUST TOO NUMB TO REALIZE IT.
HIFUMI, DON'T READ OTHER PEOPLE'S LETTERS!
SO THAT'S WHY HE EVEN LOST INTEREST IN THE GIRL HE WAS CRAZY ABOUT.
...BUT ALSO EMOTIONLESS.
SO NOW, YÛICHIRÔ IS NOT ONLY EXPRESSIONLESS...
LIKE HIS DREAM, HE CAST ANOTHER SPELL ON HIMSELF.

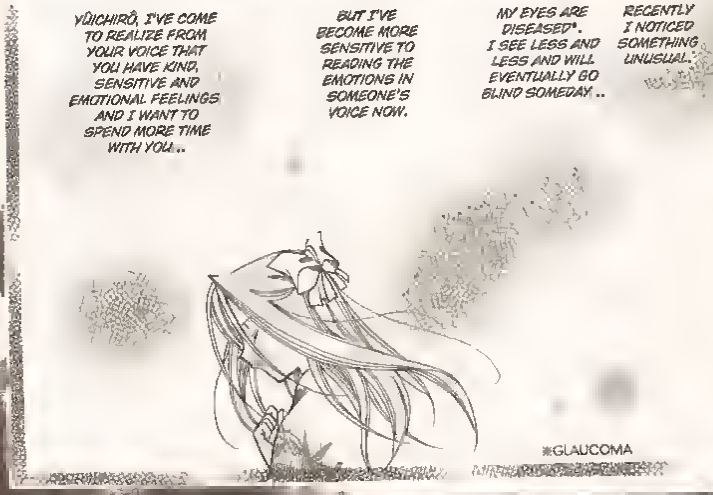
BUT NOW YOU CAN GET THEM BACK ONE BY ONE. YOU'RE FREE.
YOU STILL HAVE NO EXPRESSION ...
RIP
SHUP
WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL YOU LIKE?
YOU DIDN'T EVEN READ IT...!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! ISN'T THAT IMPORTANT?!
?!
GOODBYE.
I'M DONE HERE.
HUH?
CLATTER
WHAT IS IT TO YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU ANGRY ABOUT?

The Nineteenth and a Half Night: Silver Star Tea House

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS
SEEKING SOLACE
THEY COME TO THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE
I AM MIZUKI ASAHINA, THE OWNER.
IT IS EVENING.
EVERY DAY I CLEAN THE LODGERS' ROOMS
I AM THE LANDLORD TOO

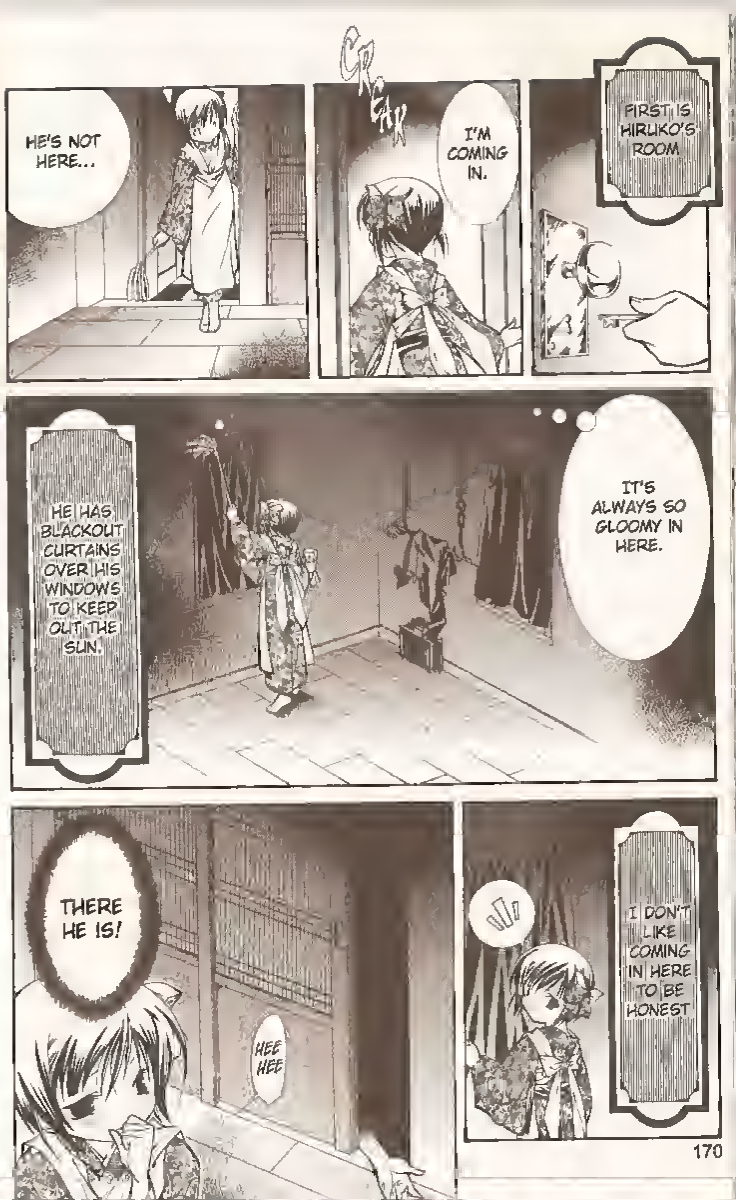


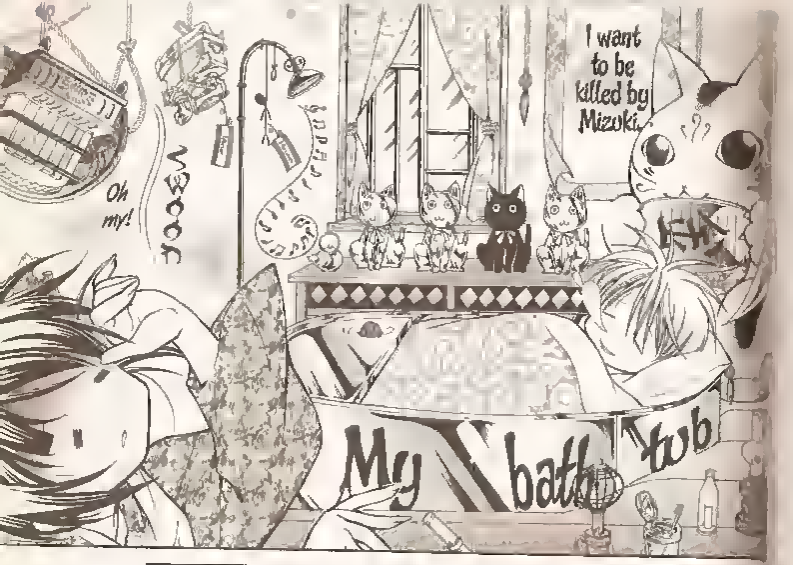



YÛICHIRÔ, I'VE COME TO REALIZE FROM YOUR VOICE THAT YOU HAVE KIND, SENSITIVE AND EMOTIONAL FEELINGS AND I WANT TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOU...
BUT I'VE BECOME MORE SENSITIVE TO READING THE EMOTIONS IN SOMEONE'S VOICE NOW.
MY EYES ARE DISEASED*. I SEE LESS AND LESS AND WILL EVENTUALLY GO BLIND SOMEDAY..
RECENTLY I NOTICED SOMETHING UNUSUAL.
*GLAUCOMA

YÛICHIRÔ NO LONGER HAS THOSE EMOTIONS...
BUT ...
...
SHE'S STARTED TO VALUE THINGS SHE CAN'T SEE LIKE EMOTIONS INSTEAD OF EXPRESSIONS...

CREAK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
STOP THAT...!
YOU REALLY HATE THE SUN!
COME OUT. I NEED TO CLEAN IN THERE TOO.
AH HA HA!
HEE HEE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
OH, THAT THING... IT'S JUST AN AVATAR...
HUH?!
HUH!
SLAM
ON OCCASION, THINGS LIKE THIS HAPPEN.
THAT'S WHY I DON'T LIKE COMING IN HERE!!
SO WHAT IS IT?!
AN UNUSUAL AVATAR ISN'T MUCH DIFFERENT.
Right?
Don't be silly with it!
WE'VE HAD A WEATHER VANE AND A PILLAR VISIT THE SHOP.


HE'S NOT HERE...
CR-CRACK
I'M COMING IN.
FIRST IS HIRUKO'S ROOM.
HE HAS BLACKOUT CURTAINS OVER HIS WINDOWS TO KEEP OUT THE SUN.
IT'S ALWAYS SO GLOOMY IN HERE.
THERE HE IS!
HEE HEE
I DON'T LIKE COMING IN HERE TO BE HONEST


I want to be killed by Mizuki.
Oh my!
MEOW
My bath tub

BLINK

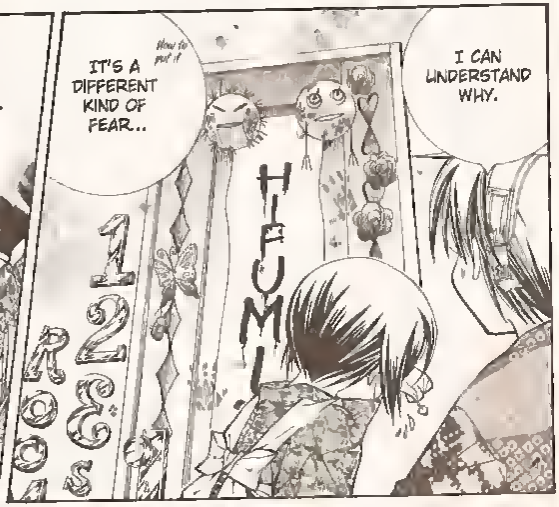
AS SEEN BY HIFUMI
SHUT UP, YOU FREAK.
Ick
YOU'RE AS GLOOMY AS EVER.
GO HOME, GO HOME! YOU POISONOUS MUSHROOM!
YOU'RE LOOKING AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER TODAY, MIZUKI.
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
OH, ALLOW ME TO CLEAN UP.
DAZE

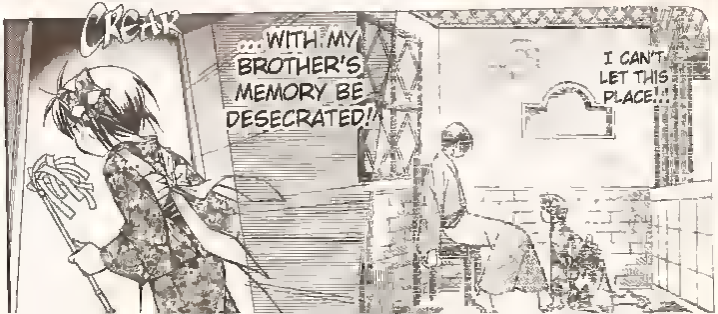
I-I'VE NEVER BEEN INSIDE.

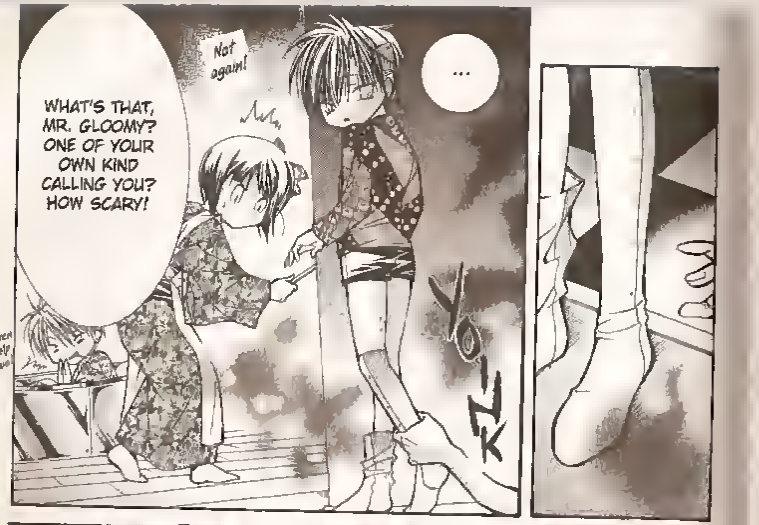
WHY DO I HAVE TO GO?

AFTER I'VE COLLECTED MYSELF, NEXT IS HIFUMI'S ROOM.

I CAN'T KEEP PUTTING IT OFF!

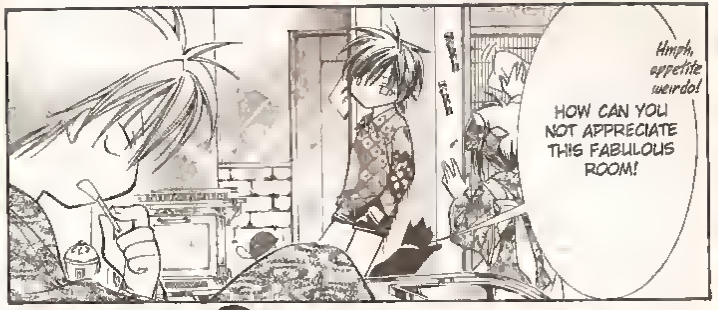

IT'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF FEAR..
How to put it
I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY.
HIFUMI
1&2&3

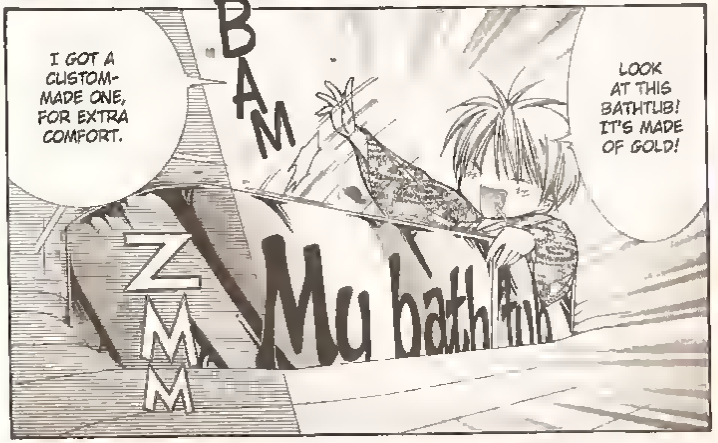

CREAK
...WITH MY BROTHER'S MEMORY BE DESECRATED!
I CAN'T LET THIS PLACE!!

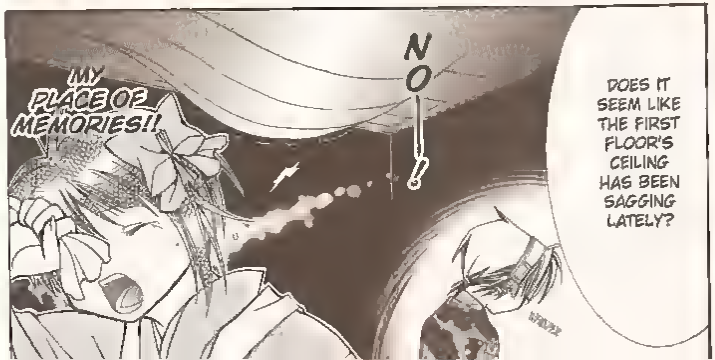

WHAT'S THAT, MR. GLOOMY? ONE OF YOUR OWN KIND CALLING YOU? HOW SCARY!
Not again!
...
YOKAI
Heaven help us

NO! DON'T!
!!!
BAM
Okay, okay You can have some purple water... Yes, you can bring your friends.
HEH, THERE ARE MANY MORE THINGS IN THIS SHOP THAT SOMEONE AS LOWLY AS YOU CANNOT FATHOM.

ZMMMMMM
ZMM
BAM
ZMMM
DON'T INVITE SOME CREATURE INTO MY SANCTUARY!
Ha ha! So many of you..
One, two, three.


Hmph, appetite weirdo!
HOW CAN YOU NOT APPRECIATE THIS FABULOUS ROOM!


I GOT A CUSTOM-MADE ONE, FOR EXTRA COMFORT.
BAM
LOOK AT THIS BATHTUB! IT'S MADE OF GOLD!
ZMMM
My bath tub


MY PLACE OF MEMORIES!!
NO!
DOES IT SEEM LIKE THE FIRST FLOOR'S CEILING HAS BEEN SAGGING LATELY?

To everyone who has helped me.

- My editor Yuki Saeki and my former editor Masataka Matsushita
- My special friends who've helped out: Wan Wan Shiro, Riru Shirayuki and Nama
- All my kind assistants: Natsumi Arai, Mieko Araki, Mai Tanaka, Mami, MIA!
- All the people at Square Enix

Hello. Shin Mashiba here. Thanks to you we're now up to volume 3. I want to thank from the bottom of my heart my very supportive editor who I've been a mental and physical strain on and all the readers who've followed me this far.

With The Nineteenth Night "Masks," we moved over to a different anthology—G Fantasy. (That's the reason for the different composition, etc.)

I still have a lot to improve upon, but please support me in this endeavour.

Special Guest
Wan Wan Shiro

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to draw four pages for me. I hope to get you proper pages in the next volume.♥

To my friends who created the writing for The Eighteenth Night (*also continued on the next page), thank you so much for the beautiful writing. You really came to my rescue...

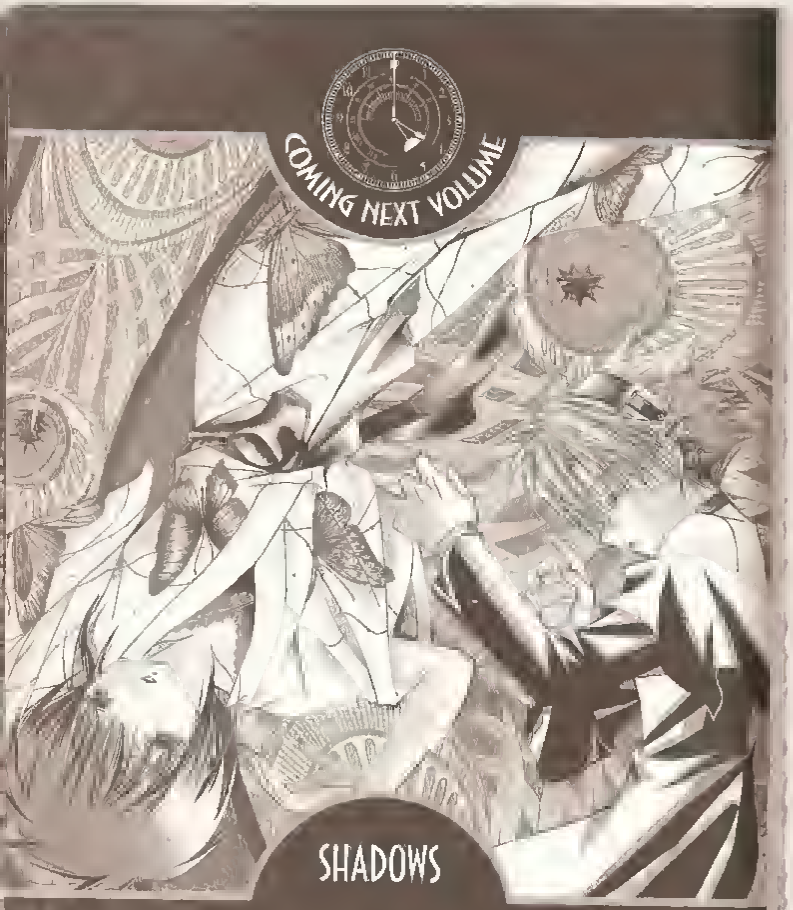
AFTER-WORD

I AM MIZUKI ASAHINA, THE OWNER.

THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE MAY HAVE SURVIVED THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE... BUT NOT THE DANGER FROM WITHIN

*THE KANTO EARTHQUAKE OF 1923

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR 3: END



Dreams on the menu in this volume: a man and a woman trapped on a malevolent streetcar, a mysterious woman with a possible key to Hiruko's past, letters in a bottle that aren't the usual call for help, a young girl who dreams of a miserable future, a boy whose dreams could kill, and a nightmare in which Hiruko himself disappears!

AVAILABLE OCTOBER 2008!

The Sad Dog

It was snowing. The snowflakes, dancing like tiny white butterflies in the night sky, were illuminated by a single shaft of light. It was just after the full moon. Heihachi stood gazing at the snow. His ravaged body, infected with tuberculosis, seemed even less substantial in the cold moonlight. He looked up towards the sky and then lowered his eyes, taking in the waterfall cascading at his feet.

"I'm hardly more than a skeleton as it is," he said. "What should it matter if I throw myself to my death now?"

He heard a voice call out to him.

"Stop!"

Heihachi turned around.

"Don't be so rash! You still have some time left."

Kumagorou, Heihachi's dear friend of many years, came into sight. As a man who was just at the brink of throwing his life away, Heihachi kept his eyes glued to the ground. Finally he looked up and met his friend's gaze. The snow continued its silent drifting. For Heihachi, nothingness was inevitable; the roar of the waterfall merely evidence that he continued to exist. Heihachi's struggle with tuberculosis had taught him the utter meaninglessness of life and death. How could Kumagorou possibly understand what he was going through? Kumagorou might be his closest friend, but this wall between them was simply insurmountable.

The two continued to stare at each other. Tears trailed down Kumagorou's cheeks.

"What is the meaning of life?" he wondered. Everything that is born will eventually die. Those who seek meaning in this world will only find disillusionment and pain. Heihachi had already discovered this truth, the true meaning of existence. It was a contradiction in itself. It was the inevitable.

The snowfall stopped. Silently, Kumagorou turned around and began his trek back the way he came. He finally understood his dear friend.

YUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

YUMEKUI KENBUN: NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR
VOL. 3
The VIZ Media Edition

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SHIN MASHIBA

Recently I've had a recurring nightmare that I'm being chased. It's probably about time management... Can you remember the first dream you ever had?

Shin Mashiba's first manga, *Yumekui Kenbun* (Nightmare Inspector), premiered in *Monthly Stencil*, a shojo magazine, in December 2001 and was then serialized in *Monthly G Fantasy* from 2003 to 2007. Mashiba-san's own nightmares include being forced to eat 50 living slugs.